

VOL 3
CHAPTERS 13 - 18



BhagavadGita

demystified
by

NITHYANANDA

Bhagavad**Gita** Demystified

*Discourses delivered to Swamis and Ananda Samajis
of the Nithyananda Order all over the world*

Bhagavad**Gita** Vol. III Chapters 13-18



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Dear Reader

Our efforts in compiling these volumes have been to get Paramahansa's message to humanity at the earliest so that the people are continued to be helped tremendously through it as early as possible in their lives. Any errors in this book are due to oversight of the compilation team and will be corrected in the next edition. In the event you do encounter errors, it is a humble request to catch the truth instead of the letter and move on. We will be happy if you bring it to our notice.

- Publishers

TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

>	oṁ	home	>	oṁ	Rome
A	a	fun	Ṭ	ṭa	touch
Am	ā	car	R>	ṭha	ant-hill
B	i	pin	S>	ḍa	duck
B [©]	ī	feen	T>	ḍha	godhook
C	u	put	U	ṇa	thunder
D\$	ū	pool	V	ṭa	(close to) think
F\$	r	rig	W	ṭha	(close to) pathetic
F\$	ṛ	(long r)	X	da	(close to) father
b¥	ḷ	*	Y	dha	(close to) breathe <u>hard</u>
E	c	play	Z	na	numb
Eo	ai	high	n	pa	purse
Am	o	over	\\$	pha	sapphire
Am	au	cow	~	ba	but
A\$	aṁ	**	^	bha	abhor
A...	aḥ	***	_	ma	mother
H\$	ka	kind	`	ya	young
I	kha	blockhead	a	ra	run
J	ga	gate	b	la	luck
K	gha	log-hut	d	va	virtue
L>	ṇa	sing	e	śa	shove
M	ca	chunk	f	ṣa	bushel
N>	cha	match	g	sa	sir
O	ja	jug	h	ha	house
P	jha	hedgehog	ī	(Note 1)	(close to) world
Am	ña	bunch	j	kṣa	worksheet
Ī	tra	three	k	jña	*
@		unpronounced (a)	@	“	Unpronounced (ā)

Note 1: “” itself is sometimes used.

** Nasalisation of the preceding vowel.

* No English Equivalent.

*** Aspiration of preceding vowel

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Bhagavad Gita: A Background

Bhagavad Gita is a sacred scripture of the *vedic* culture. As with all scriptures, it was knowledge that was transmitted verbally. It was called *śruti* in Sanskrit, meaning something that is heard.

Gita, as Bhagavad Gita is generally called, translates literally from Sanskrit as 'Sacred Song'. Unlike *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, which are stand alone expressions, Gita is written into the Hindu epic Mahabharata, called a *purana*, an ancient tale. It is part of a story, so to speak.

As a scripture, Gita is part of the ancient knowledge base of the *vedic* tradition, which is the expression of the experiences of great sages.

Vedas and *Upaniṣads*, the foundation of *śruti* literature, arose from the insight and awareness of these great sages when they went into a no-mind state. These are as old as humanity and the first and truest expressions in the journey of man's search for truth.

Unlike *Vedas*, which were revealed to the great sages, or *Upaniṣads*, which were the teachings of these great sages, Gita is part of a story narrated by Vyasa, one of these great sages. It is narrated as the direct expression of the Divine.

No other epic, or part of an epic, has the special status of Gita. As a consequence of the presence of Gita, the Mahabharata epic itself is considered a sacred Hindu scripture. Gita arose from the super-consciousness of Krishna, the supreme god, and is therefore considered a scripture.

Mahabharata, literally meaning the great Bharata, is a narration about the nation and civilization, which is now known as India. It was then a nation ruled by king Bharata and his descendants.

The story of this epic is about two warring clans, Kauravas and Pandavas, closely related to one another. Dhritarashtra, the blind king of Hastinapura and father of the 100 Kaurava brothers was the brother of Pandu, whose children were the five Pandava princes. It is a tale of strife between cousins.

Since Dhritarashtra was blind, Pandu was made the king of Hastinapura. Pandu was cursed by a sage that he would die if he ever entered into a physical relationship with his wives. He therefore had no children. Vyasa says that all the five Pandava children were born to their mothers Kunti and Madri through the blessing of divine beings. Pandu handed over the kingdom and his children to his blind brother Dhritarashtra and retired to meditate in the forest.

Kunti had received a boon when she was still a young unmarried adolescent, that she could summon any divine power at will to father a child. Before she married, she tested her boon. The Sun god Surya appeared before her. Karna was born to her as a result. In fear of social reprisals, she cast the newborn away in a river. Yudhishtira, Bhima, and Arjuna were born to Kunti after her marriage by invocation of her powers, and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva were born to Madri, the second wife of Pandu.

Yudhishtira was born to Kunti as a result of her being blessed by Yama, the god of death and justice, Bhima by Vayu, the god of wind, and Arjuna by Indra, god of all the divine beings. Nakula and Sahadeva, the youngest Pandava twins, were born to Madri, through the divine Ashwini twins.

Dhritarashtra had a hundred sons through his wife Gandhari. The eldest of these Kaurava princes was Duryodhana. Duryodhana felt no love for his five Pandava cousins. He made many unsuccessful attempts, along with his brother Dussasana, to kill the Pandava brothers. Kunti's eldest son Karna, whom she had cast away at birth, was found and brought up by a chariot driver in the palace, and by a strange twist of fate, joined hands with Duryodhana.

Dhritarashtra gave Yudhishtira one half of the Kuru kingdom on his coming of age, since the Pandava prince was the rightful heir to the throne that his father Pandu had vacated. Yudhishtira ruled from his new capital Indraprastha, along with his brothers Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. Arjuna won the hand of princess Draupadi, daughter of the king of Panchala, in a *svayamvara*, a marital contest in which princes fought for the hand of a fair damsel. In fulfilment of their mother Kunti's desire that the brothers share everything equally, Draupadi became the wife of all five Pandava brothers.

Duryodhana persuaded Yudhishtira to join a gambling session, where his cunning uncle Shakuni defeated the Pandava king. Yudhishtira lost all that he owned - his kingdom, his brothers, his wife and himself, to Duryodhana. Dussahasana shamed Draupadi in public by trying to disrobe her. The Pandava brothers and Draupadi were forced to go into exile for fourteen years, with the condition that in the last year they should live incognito.

At the end of the fourteen years, the Pandava brothers tried to reclaim their kingdom. In this effort they were helped by Krishna, the king of the Yadava clan, who is considered the eighth divine incarnation of Vishnu. However, Duryodhana refused to yield even a needlepoint of land, and as a result, the Great War, the War of Mahabharata ensued. In this war, various rulers of the entire nation that is modern India aligned with one or the other of these two clans, the Kauravas or the Pandavas.

Krishna offered to join with either of the two clans. He said, 'One of you may have me unarmed. I will not take any part in the battle. The other may have my entire Yadava army.' The first offer was made to Duryodhana, who predictably chose the large and well-armed Yadava army, in preference to the unarmed Krishna. Arjuna joyfully and gratefully chose his friend and mentor Krishna to be his unarmed charioteer!

The armies assembled in the vast field of Kurukshetra, now in the state of Haryana in modern day India. All the kings and princes were related to one another, and were often on opposite sides. Facing the Kaurava army and his friends, relatives and teachers, Arjuna was overcome by remorse and guilt, and wanted to walk away from the battle.

Krishna's dialogue with Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra is the content of Bhagavad Gita. Krishna persuaded Arjuna to take up arms and vanquish his enemies. 'They are already dead,' says Krishna, 'All those who are facing you have been already killed by Me. Go ahead and do what you have to do. That is your duty. Do not worry about the outcome. Leave that to Me.'

Gita is the ultimate practical teaching on the inner science of spirituality. It is not as some scholars incorrectly claim, a promotion of violence. It is about the impermanence of the mind and body, and the need to go beyond the mind, ego and logic.

Being blind, king Dhritarashtra does not participate in the war. His minister Sanjaya uses his powers of clairvoyance to 'see' and relate to king Dhritarashtra the goings on on the battlefield. It is in Sanjaya's voice that we hear Gita, the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.

All the Kaurava princes as well as all their commanders such as Bhishma, Drona and Karna were killed in battle. The five Pandava brothers survived as winners and became the rulers of the combined kingdom.

This dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna is a dialogue between man and God or *nara* and *Narayana* as they are termed in Sanskrit. Arjuna's questions and doubts are those of each one of us. The answers of the Divine, Krishna, transcend time and space. Krishna's message is as valid today as it was on that fateful battlefield some thousands of years ago.

Nithyananda explains the inner metaphorical meaning of Mahabharata thus:

'The Great War of Mahabharata is the fight between the positive and negative thoughts of the mind, called the *saṁskāras*. The positive thoughts are the Pandava princes and the negative thoughts are the Kaurava princes. Kurukshetra or the battlefield is the body. Arjuna is the individual consciousness and Krishna is the enlightened master.

The various commanders who led the Kaurava army represent the major blocks that the individual consciousness faces in its journey to enlightenment. Bhishma, the grand patriarch of the Kuru clan, represents parental and societal conditioning. Drona, the teacher of both the Kauravas and the Pandavas, represents the conditioning from teachers who provide knowledge including spiritual guidance. Karna represents the restrictive influence of good deeds such as charity and compassion, and finally Duryodhana represents the ego, which is the last to fall.

Parental and societal conditioning has to be overcome by rebelling against conventions. This is why, traditionally, those seeking the path of enlightenment are required to renounce the world as *sanyāsin* and move away from civilization. This conditioning does not die as long as the body lives, but its influence drops.

Drona represents all the knowledge one imbibes and the teachers one encounters, who guide us but are unable to take us through to the ultimate flowering of enlightenment. It is difficult to give them up since one feels grateful to them. This is where the enlightened master steps in and guides us.

Karna is the repository of all good deeds and it is his good deeds that stand in the way of his own enlightenment. Krishna has to take the load of Karna's *puṇya*, his meritorious deeds, before he could be liberated. The enlightened master guides one to drop one's attachment to good deeds arising out of what are perceived to be charitable and compassionate intentions. He also shows us that the quest for and the experience of enlightenment is the ultimate act of compassion that one can offer to the world.

Finally one reaches Duryodhana, one's ego, the most difficult to conquer. One needs the full help of the master here. It is subtle work and even the master's help may not be obvious, since at this point, sometimes the ego makes us disconnect from the master as well.

The Great War was between one hundred and eighty million people - one hundred and ten million on the Kaurava side representing our negative *saṁskāras* (stored memories) and seventy million on the Pandava side representing our positive *saṁskāras* and it lasted eighteen days and nights. The number eighteen has a great mystical significance. It essentially signifies our ten senses that are made up of five *jñānendriya* - the senses of perception like taste, sight, smell, hearing and touch, and five *karmendriya* - the senses initiating action like speech, bodily movements, etc., added to our eight kinds of thoughts like lust, greed, etc. All eighteen need to be dropped for Self-realization!

Mahabharata is not just an epic story. It is not merely the fight between good and evil. It is the dissolution of both positive and negative *saṁskāras* that reside in our body-mind system, which must happen for the ultimate liberation. It is a tale of the process of enlightenment.

Mahabharata is a living legend. Bhagavad Gita is the manual for enlightenment.

Like Arjuna many thousand years ago, you are here in a dialogue with a living enlightened master in this book. This is a tremendous opportunity to resolve all questions and clear all doubts with the master's words.



Introduction

In this series, enlightened master, Paramahansa Nithyananda comments on Bhagavad Gita.

Many hundreds of commentaries on Gita have been written over the years. The earliest commentaries were by the great spiritual masters such as Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva, some thousand years ago. In recent times, great masters such as Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi have spoken from Gita extensively. Many others have written volumes on this great scripture.

Nithyananda's commentary on Bhagavad Gita is not just a literary translation and a simple explanation of that translation. He takes the reader through a world tour while talking about each verse. It is believed that each verse of Gita has seven levels of meaning. What is commonly rendered is the first-level meaning. Here, an enlightened master takes us beyond the common into the uncommon, with equal ease and simplicity.

To read Nithyananda's commentary on Gita is to obtain an insight that is rare. It is not mere reading; it is an experience; it is meditation.

Shankara, the great master and philosopher said:

'A little reading of Gita, a drop of Ganga water to drink, remembering Krishna once in a while, all this will ensure that you have no problems with the god of death.'

Editors of these volumes of Bhagavad Gita have expanded upon the original discourses delivered by Nithyananda through further discussions with Him. For ease of understanding for English speaking readers, and in their academic interest, the original Sanskrit verses and their English translation have been included as an appendix to this book.

This reading is meant to help every individual in daily life as well as in the endeavour to realize the ultimate Truth. It creates every possibility to attain *nityānanda*, eternal bliss!

Bhagavad**Gita**

The Field And The Knower Of The Field

CHAPTER 13

You are a wave in the ocean of Existence. When the wave understands that it is not separate from the ocean, its resistance drops and it merges with the ocean.



- ◆ You have spoken about the need to be in the present moment so that one is aware. What does that mean? How do I know I am in the present? Will others know I am in the present?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, is the difference between religion and spirituality the difference between conscience and consciousness?
- ◆ If you say that the attributes listed by Krishna can only be reached through enlightenment, what hope is there for us to be enlightened? Even if the master guides us how do we move?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, I am confused by what I have read about *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. You said *puruṣa* is the water of the ocean and *prakṛti* is the waves. It is so simple. Why are other explanations so complicated?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, are we talking about an intellectual understanding here? I understand that none of my material possessions are permanent. In any case, when I die I cannot take anything with me. But as long as I live in this body, I need sustenance and I need to work for material benefits. This work is reality, not an illusion. What is the answer?
- ◆ From what you have said, it appears that acquisition of knowledge is not helpful in spiritual progress. All my life I have been advised to read one scripture or another or listen to one guru or another. In fact, I started coming to your discourses after reading your books. How can this be bad or unhelpful?
- ◆ You talked about the *vedic* system of education, the *gurukul*. How practical is it to have a system where children can move about without wearing clothes?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, why do your disciples and people in your ashram communities wear white? What is the qualification for them to wear the saffron cloth?



The Field And The Knower Of The Field

In this chapter, Krishna speaks to Arjuna about *kṣetra* (Field) and *kṣetrajñya* (Knower of the Field). This chapter is known as the *kṣetra kṣetrajñya vibhāga yoga*, or the yoga of discrimination of the *kṣetra*, the field, and *kṣetrajñya*, the knower of the field.

Krishna clearly talks about the physical matter in which we exist, as well as the consciousness that stays in the matter. In some way or other all of us are related to this whole universe, whether we understand it or not, whether we experience it or not. The consciousness is the root cause. It is not only the origin, but also the cause. It is the source from which we come and in which we stay. The whole universe, the universal consciousness, is the space in which we all happen.

Krishna uses the wave and the ocean as an analogy. The ocean is the universal consciousness or god, *ātma* or whatever we may call it. Buddhists use the word *nirvāṇa*, *vedantis* say *brahman* and Muslims say *Allah*. Whatever names we may use, we mean the same thing meaning the cosmic energy or universal consciousness. Krishna reveals the secret that we are like the waves, and the whole is the ocean. He explains how we can experience oneness with the ocean.

Our only problem in life is that somehow we have forgotten that we are a part of the ocean. We forgot that we belong to the ocean. We forgot that we belong to the *kṣetrajñya*. The word *kṣetrajñya* means consciousness, which is the cause for the field to function. *Kṣetra* means field and *kṣetrajñya* means knower of the field. *Kṣetra* means body and *kṣetrajñya* means the consciousness that knows it has a body. Our consciousness is *kṣetrajñya* and our body or matter is *kṣetra*.

In this chapter, Krishna reveals the secrets of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya*. If we don't know the secrets of *kṣetrajñya*, the *kṣetra* acts as if it is the owner.

A small example:

You buy a new car. You sit in the car and start driving. Suddenly, after ten minutes you realize that you do not know how to stop it. If you don't know how to stop the car, you are not driving the car, the car is driving you.

In the same way, we get into this mind and into this body and start living. Suddenly at one point, we find that we are unable to stop the body or mind. It goes on as it wants and it is uncontrollable.

If we have the habit of drinking coffee at seven in the morning, we don't need to remember to do it by checking our watch. The moment it becomes seven, a 'coffee bell' will ring inside the mind. If we are addicted to smoking, the moment the craving for smoking happens, or any situation triggers the craving, immediately we feel like smoking.

Throughout our life, our whole system is not under our control. The body and the mind are controlling us instead of us controlling them. It is similar to the car driving us instead of us driving the car. At this point, we are not the owner of the body and mind, the body and mind own us.

Bring the body and mind under your conscious awareness. The body and mind are good servants but not good masters. As servants, they are great. Of course, without the body and mind you cannot live life, you cannot enjoy life. They are needed. But, unless they are under your control, they will become your masters.

Only two options are possible: Either you enjoy them or they enjoy you. In the beginning you may start smoking. After some time, you may not really be enjoying the smoke, but the smoke will be enjoying you. Similarly, in the beginning you may start drinking alcohol. After some time, the alcohol will be drinking you. In the beginning you start a habit and after some time that habit takes over your life. The habit will be enjoying *your* life. Then you are no longer a person with choices: You are a set of habits that is continuously repeated without your control.

When we start using a car without reading the owner's manual, suddenly we realize that we do not know where the hand brake is. We don't know how to turn left or right. When we enter into the body and mind without knowing how to handle them, we are in the same situation. Bring the body and mind under your control before you are brought under their control.

Whether it is a material life or a spiritual life, unless the body and mind are under our control, whatever we may think or whatever we want to do is of no

use. Suppose we sit down in the morning and draw out a big plan for the day, analyzing all the data, 'I must do this,' 'I must do that,' but at the end of the day, beyond our control, we spontaneously indulge in drink and sleep or other things, what is the use of the whole day's plan? Nothing! We go on creating what we want to do in our mind, but at the end of the day, the body behaves the way it wants to. Even the mind behaves as it wants to. We get nowhere!

Naturally, your whole life moves in a 'logic-less' way. You work so much to elevate your life. Yet your body and mind do what they want. Then you end up in suffering. 'Life,' the very word 'life,' can happen only when the body and mind are under your control. As long as the body and mind are not under your control, you will not even experience the word 'life.' Until the body and mind are under your control, you are not living. The engraved memories are living you.

Until we experience the *kṣetrajñya*, the knower of the field, the real life never begins. This is why the *vedic* system considers a person to be born only when his individual consciousness is awakened. Until then his physical birth is not accepted, nor is he considered a human being or a *manuṣya*. According to the *Vedas*, when someone's inner consciousness is awakened he is considered a human being or a person who has taken birth. Until then he is one among the animals.

The Sanskrit word *manuṣya* has two meanings. One is 'descendant of Manu,' and the other is 'the man who can handle the mind or one who has gone beyond the mind.' Manu is supposed to be our first forefather. Only when we can handle the mind, we become *manuṣya*. In Sanskrit they say, '*pratyagātma caitanya jāgrataṁ*.' It means that only when the individual consciousness is awakened is one considered to be a person.

In the Indian *vedic* system, when a child turns seven he is initiated into the Gayatri, a sacred *mantra* or chant. You should understand one important thing here. *The vedic* religion, or Hinduism, or the *Sanātana Dharma*, is the only religion in which there is no baptism, no initiation. You are not given any faith, you are not given any concept and you are not given any philosophy. You are not asked to believe in anything. You are just given a technique to control your body and mind. That's all. The Gayatri *mantra* is a mere technique with no reference to any deity, taught to the child when he turns six or seven years of age. The Gayatri *mantra* means 'Let me meditate on the energy which awakens the consciousness in me, and let that consciousness help me to meditate on it.' That's all.

*Om bhūr bhuva suvaḥ
tat savitur vareṇyam ।
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yonaḥ prachodayāt ॥*

This *mantra* does not have any other meaning. There is no mention of Gayatri Devi (a Hindu Goddess) or any deity with five faces and such things. No. This *mantra* means ‘Let me meditate on that consciousness which awakens my intelligence, and let that consciousness help me to meditate on it.’ That’s all.

The first thing that our *ṛṣis* or ancient Indian enlightened masters want us to do is to bring our body and mind under our control. They want us to learn how to live with our body and mind. The Gayatri *mantra* is like an owner’s manual for the body and mind. If we have a car, an owner’s manual is a basic need. Without reading the owner’s manual, if we start driving a car, then whose mistake is it?

In all vehicles we can see important instructions and warnings on the airbags. ‘Airbags may cause serious injury.’ ‘Kids under the age of twelve should not sit in the front seat.’ ‘Please read the owner’s manual to know more about the airbag.’ In the same way, only at around the age of seven do we start to handle our body. Until the age of seven, we live at the instinct level. After the age of seven the intellect starts working and we start making decisions. The moment we start making decisions, we should first know how to bring the body and mind under control. That is why the *vedic* masters teach the technique to awaken the inner intelligence and to master the consciousness. It is similar to reading the owner’s manual before using the car.

Q: *Swamiji, you said that unless a person has the spark of enlightenment within him, he would not be attracted to an enlightened master. You have also said that all of us are enlightened but we are not aware of it. So, why is it that all of us are not attracted in the same way to you or other enlightened masters?*

An excellent question!

Yes, it is true that all human beings have the potential to be enlightened. Every person carries that spark of divinity within. There is no sinner amongst humans. There is no doubt about that.

You have free will as a human being to work through your senses. By and large, most people choose to be led by the senses rather than to lead their senses. Senses

create desires for the outer world. Many times you may enjoy them. But these desires are never fulfilled unless you are in control of the senses. The senses will simply bring you back to the same scene again and again, like how an animal returns instinctively to what it considers its home.

These unfulfilled desires are called *saṁskāras*, the baggage of experiences and memories that build up within you. These *saṁskāras* leave deep grooves in your brain and control you unconsciously. What you originally thought was free will is not really free will at all. You are like an ox that follows the same ploughed groove in the field. You are caught. You are addicted.

Without exception, all your sensory pleasures are of this nature. Whether you call that pleasure lust or love, it makes no difference. These are just words from your own dictionary. These are words you use to justify the moral standards of your society and religion. Any attachment that you form that arises out of emotions or sensory pleasures is bondage, be it the love for your children, parents, spouse or any other person. The object of attention does not change the bondage of attachment.

Even the attachment to God or master is a form of bondage. Only when the relationship develops without attachment, when it becomes a relationship that is not based on give-and-take or pleasure and enjoyment, does it become a devotional relationship. In such a relationship, one identifies oneself with the object and surrenders. This is what renunciation is about. It is total surrender with no expectation.

It takes many births to reach this state of surrender. There are those of you who have come to me in many of your earlier lifetimes! There is no guarantee that you will stay with me in this lifetime also! It is your choice.

When a person does not choose to stay with the master, the spirit experiences pangs of regret as it leaves the field, the body-mind. At death, when the spirit crosses the seven energy layers around the body, the entire life experience is played back to it. The spirit witnesses all those material pleasures with no joy. During life, those scenes gave a lot of joy to the senses. During life, those scenes were in glorious color and four dimensions. During the transition to death, these scenes are colorless, one-dimensional and hold no attraction any more.

However, if we have had even one or two spiritual experiences in our lifetime, such as time spent with an enlightened master, or a spiritual book like the Gita in deep awareness, such a scene will be played back to the spirit in glorious multi-dimensional color. The spirit then longs to return to such an experience.

Then at the time of death, as the spirit crosses the causal layer of energy (one of the seven energy bodies within us), the entire body-mind system goes into a deep coma, forgetting all that happened in the previous lifetime. The next birth takes place in an unconscious state, unconscious of the experiences, memories and desires of the past lives. The cycle repeats.

At some point in time, the longing of the spirit for the spiritual experience that it keeps missing is so intense that it resolves to reach it at whatever cost! Such a spirit is born in a body with a deep desire and a deep need to reach an enlightened master so that it can seek its release from unfulfilled desires. Such a person may even choose a body that will have a disease that no medical system can cure. That is why many who come to the master for healing become his disciples. That is how their spirit leads them to him.

Do not think it is an accident that you are with me, or reading these books, listening to these tapes or watching these videos. There is no accident in this universe. Everything happens with a cause and for a reason. However, it is your choice whether you wish to follow it up in this lifetime or let your spirit yearn for the experience for many more births.



What You Know Is Not You

*13.1 Arjuna said: O Krishna, I wish to know and understand about **prakṛti** and **puruṣa**, passive and active energies,*

The field and the knower of the field, and of knowledge and of the end of knowledge.

13.2 Lord Krishna replied to Arjuna saying: This body, O son of Kunti, is called the field,

Anyone who knows this body is called the knower of the field.

13.3 O Bharata, we should understand that I am the Knower in all bodies, the Creator.

In my opinion knowledge means to understand this body or the field of creation as well as the Creator, one who knows this field.

Krishna explains, 'O Kaunteya (son of Kunti), O Arjuna, this body is called the field; the person who knows this body is called the knower of the field or *kṣetrajñya*.'

Whatever you know is not you. If you know something, it is not you. For instance, you can read this book because it is separate and apart from you. Similarly, if you can know your body, then it is not you. If you can know your mind, then it is not you. If you can know your thoughts, then they are not you. Whatever you know is not you. You are separate from that or above that. That is why you are able to know it. Whether it is the body, thoughts or emotions, whatever you know is not you.

Now we need to separate these two, the field from the knower of the field. Once we separate these two, the body will be blissful and joyful! Consciousness will be liberated. When these two join, that is where the problem starts.

A one-liner that I read somewhere said:

A man tells his friend, 'My sign is earth and my wife's sign is water. Together we make mud!'

Water and earth are beautiful as they are. Only when they are mixed do we get mud!

Similarly, consciousness, as it is, is beautiful and so is the body. When the two meet, that is where the trouble starts. All we need to do is understand the field and the knower, that is, what we are and what we are not. The problem in our lives is that when we identify ourselves with something, we believe we are that. Instead of understanding that we possess a mind, we believe we *are* the mind. The mind then becomes 'I'.

As long as I think this table is mine, there is no problem. If I start thinking that I am this table, the problem starts! As long as we think that our body and mind are ours, there is no problem. But the problem appears the moment we identify with them. Krishna says, 'We must understand that whatever we know is not us.' Inch by inch He starts to explain the difference between *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya*.

One more thing, when we understand that something is separate from us, we never feel that we must renounce it. We simply need to renounce the idea that we are that particular thing, that's all. In fact, we don't even need to renounce; we will simply know that there is nothing to renounce just by being aware of the way in which our body or mind works. Neither will we feel tortured by them, nor will we feel like torturing them. The people who are tortured by the body and mind are caught in this world and its troubles. Another group of people continuously torture the body and mind in the name of *tapas*, penance.

I have seen people in India practicing yoga by sitting or standing on nails for five years! There are people who torture the body by standing on one leg, rolling on the ground or walking on fire. There is no need to torture the body in such ways. Actually we torture the body because we think that it is torturing us. We take revenge. At one extreme, people are caught in pleasures of the senses and killing themselves. At the other extreme, people torture the body in the name of penance. Neither knows how to handle the body and mind.

A person who knows how to handle his body and mind enjoys the whole thing. He is totally at ease with himself. He feels completely relaxed with his body and mind. He intensely enjoys all pleasures and comforts and he never abuses the body.

Enjoying and abusing are two different things. Enjoying is when the mind and the body are in tune with each other. We feel ease, comfort, a deep sense of relaxation and a feeling of being at home with ourselves.

Many times we think we are enjoying, but the body and mind are not in tune with each other. For example, we watch a late-night movie or a soccer match on television until 2 am. Our eyes would be burning, our body would be begging, 'Please, give me some rest.' Our eyes would close by themselves during a commercial break and we would want to go to sleep. Still we say, 'No, I will sit and watch this.' Don't think these are pleasures and enjoyment. It only means that we are not using our body, we are abusing it. A person who knows his body and mind and can keep them under control never abuses the body.

Why do we sit and watch television until 2 am? Our mind is not under our control. The mind tempts us to do something, and for the sake of the mind, we abuse the body. Abusing the body for the sake of the mind is pleasure at its extreme. There is nothing wrong in real pleasure in the right amount, but going against our body for the sake of the mind is going behind too much pleasure. This is one category of people.

Another category of people tortures the body for the sake of the mind, in the name of penance or *tapas*. These people are in search of peace. They have not experienced peace or bliss. They go on disrespecting and torturing the body: going without food for months together, standing on one leg, standing on nails, or walking on fire. They continuously abuse the body or mind in one way or the other.

Sadists are always masochists and masochists are always sadists. Torturing others happens when we torture ourselves. If we torture ourselves, naturally we will torture others. Please understand that we torture others when we do not feel comfortable within ourselves. We torture others when we are not at ease with ourselves because we are in a low or depressed mood. Torturing others is directly related to torturing ourselves.

If we think that we are the mind, we torture our body; and if we think we are the body, we torture our mind. The person who knows the secrets of the body and mind neither tortures nor abuses them. He knows how to use them and live

blissfully with them. His inner space overflows with bliss, and his outer space enjoys comforts and real pleasures. Krishna reveals the secrets of how to keep the body and mind in beautiful and blissful energy, and the inner space flowing in blissful consciousness.

Krishna says further, 'O Bharata, I am also the Knower in all bodies. To understand this body and the knower is called knowledge.'

Beautiful! Here, He makes two statements. He says, 'I am the Knower in all the bodies, and to understand the knower and the body is knowledge.' He says that understanding the field or the body-mind and the consciousness is knowledge. He says, 'I myself reside as the consciousness inside the beings.'

Our consciousness is God and there is no separate thing as God. The problem arises when we start thinking that we are the body and the mind. A person who understands that he is consciousness liberates himself. He is enlightened. He becomes the Buddha. Consciousness is God.

The Equation is:

God + body mind = man

man - body mind = God!

Whether we believe it or not, we *are* consciousness. Let us see how we miss it, how we miss and mess our life!

Here is a beautiful story about knowing the body and the mind and how we miss realizing that we are consciousness.

A pregnant lioness was hunting for food one day when she came across a flock of sheep. She tried to attack the flock but the effort was too much for her. She fell on the ground, giving birth to a cub and also died due to the pressure she exerted.

The flock of sheep saw the newborn lion cub. They started playing with him. They felt that they should take care of this cub, as one species often does for a newborn of another species. They just took pity on him and adopted him. The sheep started taking care of the cub in the same way they care for their young ones, feeding him with goat milk and grass!

The cub started behaving like a sheep and grew up along with the sheep. He lived happily amongst them, not knowing that they were different from him.

After some time the problem started slowly. It had to. The mother sheep started receiving complaints about the behavior of the cub, 'He is too arrogant,' 'He is too strong and rough,' 'He is not playing properly with us.' Naturally the cub was sidelined. Whenever any argument arose, they decided to punish him.

After a few days, the lion cub started to wonder, 'What is this? I don't feel that I am really living. Is this all a lie? Is this all that there is to life - eating grass, jumping around and bleating, just going around the grasslands? I don't feel I am leading a full life.' He felt that he was unlike the others, that somehow he was different. He did not feel that he was being himself.

Whenever he saw a forest, he was tempted to go and explore the forest. But his sheep mother had warned him that it was the one thing he should not do. She forbade him from straying away from the flock, obviously now considering him to be one of the sheep. She cautioned him that if he did so, the lions inside the forest would kill him.

This whole story is actually about the spiritual seeker! It is about how a person takes birth, starts seeking and how he achieves fulfillment. It's a wonderful story. I love this story. That is why I repeat this story whenever I can!

The mother sheep said, 'You cannot go there, there are lions out there.' The cub somehow managed to suppress his search or feeling of emptiness even though he felt drawn in and was tempted to go into the forest to explore. After some time he decided, 'I think this life is not for me.' But somehow the mother sheep managed to pressurize and control him. She played a big drama - weeping, crying, convincing, and finally she got this lion married!

A small story within this story:

There was a big marriage going on in the forest. The king lion and a lioness were getting married. All the animals of the forest gathered for the ceremony and were celebrating. At the center, there was a dance floor where a big party was going on, but only the lions were dancing and enjoying. The rest of the animals were scared to join them, so they were standing outside and watching. Amidst this celebration, suddenly a rat jumped onto the dance floor and started dancing.

A lion caught the rat and roared, 'How dare you come onto the dance floor? Don't you see that all the animals are standing outside? Only lions dance here!'

The rat sternly said, 'Keep quiet! I was also a lion before I married!'

Now, coming back to the sheep-lion story, the lion cub got married and a few years passed by. After some years he again started thinking and analyzing, 'What is going on? I am leading the same old life, eating, bleating and jumping around! I feel something is seriously missing! I have found whatever best one can get - a good mother, good wife, nice life - but deep inside me, there is only emptiness. I don't feel fulfilled. What is happening to me?'

Again he started searching. The seeking started.

Then suddenly one day, a lion from the nearby forest attacked the flock of sheep. When this happened all the sheep ran away. This sheep-lion neither felt like running away, nor did he have the courage to stand and face the lion. He knew the lion was trying to attack, but he thought, 'He looks so graceful. Something about him is different.' He had never seen such a majestic beast before. So, slowly, somehow, unconsciously this sheep-lion felt attracted and drawn towards the lion. Because of the attraction, neither did he run away, nor did he have the courage to face the lion, because he thought he was a sheep under attack.

He started walking away slowly but kept his face and gaze fixed on the lion. The lion straightaway came near him and caught him. The sheep-lion started bleating, 'Oh, please leave me alone and do not kill me!' The lion said, 'Fool, I have not come to kill you! You are a lion, why are you bleating and shouting for help? Why do you think I will kill you?'

'Lion?' the sheep-lion suspected that the lion was trying to cheat him and take him to the forest. He became frightened and cried, 'No, leave me.' The lion again said, 'Fool! You are a lion, why don't you understand that?' The sheep-lion refused to believe the lion. He escaped and ran away.

Even though he ran away, the sheep-lion was unable to forget the lion. For a week he was afraid. Fear is usually there after the first glimpse, after the first experience. He had had the first glimpse of the lion! This is how Arjuna felt after his first experience of the Divine, his first glimpse of Krishna. It is an experience that evokes fear as well as a blissful attraction.

A week passed by and the fear slowly subsided. He felt drawn to the lion once again. The sheep-lion felt like meeting the lion. 'I think I should meet the lion once more,' he thought. One part of his mind was saying, 'No, no, no, I

am afraid that he may kill me,' while another part was saying, 'No, it was such a blissful experience with him. He is so graceful and I want to meet him again!'

Please be very clear that unless you have enlightenment within yourself, you will not feel attracted towards an enlightened person. If we feel attached or connected to an enlightened person and feel we are in tune with him in some way, understand that it is a sign that we have enlightenment within us already. However, if we have not matured or grown to the level of feeling the enlightenment within us, we may not feel even a slight connection with an enlightened person.

There are millions of people living in this city. Why are only a few hundred sitting here for these lectures? Not only that, thousands came at least once and have not come back the second time. Why do only a few come regularly? The moment you feel attracted to an enlightened master's teachings, be very clear that the enlightenment in you has started expressing or flowering!

That is the reason why the sheep-lion remembered the lion and felt attracted to it. He felt the intense urge to see the lion again and finally decided to meet him. But how would he meet him? The lion never sent out flyers saying, 'In such and such a place, I am doing a program! You can meet me here.' The sheep-lion came to the edge of the meadow where the forest started, and waited expectantly every day for the lion to appear.

After a few months the lion appeared. The moment the sheep-lion saw him, his fear surfaced and he was caught in the dilemma once again despite having waited for months to see him. This time the lion came towards him and asked, 'How are you doing?' The sheep-lion started bleating again, 'I am, I am, I am....'

He was unable to answer, but did not run away, as he had done earlier. The lion said, 'Don't worry. If you are afraid, I will go away. I am not going to eat you because you are a lion. And because I can't eat you, I won't kill you. Also since I see no use in you, there is no reason for me to stay here if you are afraid.' Saying this, the lion started walking back towards the forest.

The sheep-lion immediately pleaded with the lion to stay and spend a few moments with him. He also added, 'Don't come too close. You can stand at a distance and talk. Please stand ten feet away and I will stand here. But please spend some time with me.' The sheep-lion was now neither able to forget the lion and escape, nor did he have the courage to go near him!

This is the next phase of growth for a seeker.

With around ten or fifteen feet between them they stood and talked. However, again and again the lion said, 'You are a lion. Fool! You think you are a sheep! You are not like the friends you live with. This is not the way you are supposed to live.'

The sheep-lion started to think about what the lion said. Slowly the doubt he had that the lion was going to take him to the forest and eat him disappeared. Now the sheep-lion was convinced that the lion did not have an ulterior motive. He understood that the lion did not benefit in any way because of him. He thought, 'I have nothing to offer him and I am of no use to him.'

Only when this confidence comes into the mind of the disciple, he starts trusting the words of the master!

That is why in the *vedic* system spiritual knowledge is free. We start trusting the master only when we realize that we cannot contribute to the master in any way, that the master has nothing to gain from us, that he is not missing us. The trust between the master and disciple starts when the disciple understands that he has nothing to add to what the master already has in his being. The master has everything and is overflowing. The master is sharing because he is overflowing. He is not giving in order to take something from us. His very being is overflowing. Only when you understand that, will you start trusting the master's words.

The sheep-lion developed that much trust on the lion. He thought, 'The lion is not going to kill and eat me. If he wanted to do that, he would have done it long ago. One thing is certain. He is not going to gain anything from me. So why does he say I am a lion?'

Then, the sheep-lion thought about what the lion had said. When we understand that we have nothing to give the master, that he is overflowing out of his ecstasy and he is only sharing the joy and bliss, we start experimenting with things more deeply. Until we understand that whatever the master says is only for our own benefit, we never try to experiment with his words.

The sheep-lion thought about the lion, 'He looks so courageous, so graceful, so bold, and he is radiating so much confidence. It doesn't look like he is lying.' We can clearly tell whether someone is lying or not by seeing the eyes of a person. We don't need a lie detector! All we need to do is look into his eyes. So the sheep-lion thought, 'He doesn't look like a liar. Then why is he again and again telling me that I am a lion? I know I am a sheep.'

The lion then said, 'I think you are not interested in believing me. Anyhow, I am not interested in wasting my time. I am going.' But the sheep-lion begged, 'No, no, no! Please, at least give me an appointment.'

The lion asked why he wanted the appointment. The sheep-lion replied, 'I will go home and think about whatever you have told me. Then I will come back and clear my doubts with you.' The lion agreed, saying he would meet him at the same place in one month's time.

The sheep-lion then started to contemplate, 'How can I be a lion? I know for sure I am a sheep. I eat grass. I bleat like a sheep and go around with sheep. So, how can I be a lion?' He thought and thought. He considered all the great philosophical questions, the very same questions that I have been answering all these days!

There must have been some books: 'sheep-philosophy,' 'sheep-bible,' 'sheep-gita.' The sheep-lion read all of them and thought of all the possible questions. He made a big list of questions that his mother and father never answered. One important thing though is that he never told his mother that he met the lion because if she knew, she would stop him! She would not have allowed him to go to the edge of the forest. She would have told him, 'Never go there! You must stay in the meadows. You cannot go to the other side into the forest.'

Parents are afraid for their young ones. They send their children to the temples but never to a *Swami*, never to a spiritual master! To them there is always a danger. See, Swami Vivekananda is great as long as he takes birth in the neighbor's house, not in our house!

Anyhow, finally after one month, the appointment date arrived. The sheep-lion collected the best grass, whatever he thought was best, as an offering to the lion. He gave it to the lion saying, 'Please have all these things. I preserved them carefully for you.' Seeing the love of the sheep-lion, the lion also acted as if he was eating and enjoying the grass, just so that he could please the sheep-lion and make him feel more connected. He was zeroing down the distance. He wanted the sheep-lion to feel comfortable and connected in his presence. Only then could any transformation or transmission of knowledge happen. Just to make the sheep-lion comfortable, the lion acted like he was eating the grass.

Naturally, the sheep-lion asked, 'Is it good? Is it tasty?' The lion said, 'Yes, yes, it is tasty. I am happy. You cook well. You have done a great job.' Some compliment is given!

After accepting the grass offering, the lion started to slowly say the same things to the sheep-lion, 'I am telling you again and again, but you are not ready to listen. You are a lion, not a sheep.'

By now, the sheep-lion knew that what he was thinking was wrong. Still he was unable to accept what the lion was saying as right. How could he be a lion? He knew by now he was not a sheep. He applied logic, 'My color is different. If I am a sheep, I should be like my friends. I think differently. I do not feel satisfied or comfortable with that life. This means I am something more. But I am unable to understand how I could be a lion.' He was not able to comprehend what the lion said. At the same time he was not sure about what he had been thinking all along.

One day, the lion said to him, 'Come, let us go to a nearby lake for a picnic.' By now the sheep-lion was comfortable with the lion and agreed. When they reached the lake, the lion suddenly grabbed the neck of the sheep-lion, dragged him to the water, and told him to look at the reflection in the water.

The lion asked him, 'Do you see an image of a lion in the reflection?'

The sheep-lion replied, 'Yes, I see your reflection. You are standing.'

The lion asked, 'Do you see another reflection?'

The sheep-lion said, 'Yes, I see another small lion, your baby. Where is the baby? Your baby is not here but his reflection is here. Is he inside the water?'

The lion roared and said, 'Fool, it is you!'

The sheep-lion refused to believe and said, 'No, no, no, maybe your baby is hiding inside the water. Call him.'

The lion said, 'Fool, it is not my baby. It is you.'

The lion then told him, 'Look, I am now moving away. Only you are standing there. See what is happening!'

The sheep-lion then saw the reflection. Suddenly, the first shock happened to him, 'I think there is some truth in what the lion says.'

Again, he was frightened, 'If I am a lion, I must live in the forest. I cannot take that responsibility. If I am a sheep, I am so comfortable. Already, I know all my sheep friends and I get regular food. I know where food is available. I know where I cook. I know where I eat. I know where my house is. I know where my wife is. I know where my life is. I know all these things and I am completely

accustomed to the life of a sheep. But if I understand that I am a lion, the whole thing must be dropped. I must renounce the whole thing. I must take a big jump. It's difficult.' That fear came up and he simply ran away; he escaped one more time.

After a few months, the lion came in search of the sheep-lion. This time the sheep-lion did not have any grass offerings. Instead the lion brought an offering of meat for the sheep-lion! When he saw the sheep-lion, he didn't talk. There were no intellectual discourses, philosophical discussions or question-and-answer sessions. Straightaway, he caught hold of the sheep-lion, opened his mouth, and put the meat inside.

The moment the sheep-lion tasted the blood, the moment he tasted the meat, something reeled inside him. Something happened to his being. Something happened to his consciousness. Suddenly he swallowed the meat and roared!

The roaring is what we call enlightenment! Most importantly, the sheep-lion realized that he had been a lion from the beginning, from day one!

The same thing happens in our lives. Again and again, we think we are sheep. At some point, we start suspecting, 'I am not feeling satisfied with this life. What is happening?' And after some time, suddenly we see a lion that teaches us, 'You are God. You are that energy. You are consciousness.' We get scared and run away. At home we start thinking, 'I think he has some plans. He wants to build an *ashram* and he needs me for it. That is why he says these things.'

After a few days we realize that he already has an *ashram*; we don't need to build one for him or contribute to his *ashram*. We realize that he has everything and doesn't need anything. Then slowly we start analyzing, 'Why is he coming everyday and saying the same thing? Everyday he comes and for two or three hours he says the same thing in a loud voice. Why?' After a few days we think, 'One thing is certain, whatever I think about me is wrong. But I don't know whether whatever he says is right or not.'

During meditation, one glimpse of consciousness happens. When that happens we again run away with the fear, 'No, no, no. This is not for me. If the same thing happens again, I may leave everything and go after him.' At this stage, the master suddenly catches hold of us and puts the meat of solid spiritual experience into our mouth. Something happens in our system, in our consciousness. Suddenly we open our eyes and roar, declaring the experience that happened in our being. We realize that from day one, from the beginning, we have been That. The sheep-lion has always been a lion.

But it requires another lion to make a sheep-lion realize that he is indeed a lion.

From day one, we are the knower or the *kṣetrajñya*, the consciousness. But by mistake we start thinking that we are the body-mind, in the same way that the sheep-lion thought that he was a sheep. Suddenly a person who has already experienced that he is consciousness guides us saying, 'This is consciousness and that is body-mind. Understand that you are consciousness.'

Here, the same story is happening between Krishna and Arjuna. Krishna explains *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya*. He tells Arjuna that he is not a sheep but a lion; he is not merely the field; he is the knower of the field.

Q: You have spoken about the need to be in the present moment so that one is aware. What does that mean? How do I know I am in the present? Will others know I am in the present?

To be completely immersed in whatever you do at any particular moment without bothering about what is going to happen is being in the present.

As I have often said, focus on the food when you eat. Do not talk, do not read, do not watch television, do not do anything else when you eat. You neglect the food. You disrespect the food. So it turns into garbage. If you focus on the food when you eat, you would probably eat half as much and stay healthy also. When you eat unconsciously, you become obese.

It is as simple as that.

Numerous masters have spoken of being in the present. They teach various ways to be in the present. Many of you have ideas of what it is to be in the present.

When you are in the present, there is no need to announce that you are in the now or in the present. If that need arises, be sure that you are not in the present. If you make a loud effort to be in the present, your presence will disturb, confuse and threaten others. Your inner chatter will be so loud that though you cannot hear it, others will want to run away from you!

You will become like the people who insist that everything around them should be silent and undisturbed when they meditate. They create chaos so that they can be centered. You need to bring your own mind to order, not the minds of others.

People will automatically catch your fragrance if you are in the present. They will smell the fragrance and feel your presence automatically. If they don't, you are not in the present. When you are in the present moment, your presence centers, calms, and moves others into the present moment. You will have no need to advertise it.

If you constantly tell people how much you are in the present moment, you are not where you think you are. You are caught in your own inner chatter, that's all.

Presence and being in the present do not happen through seeking. They happen when you stop seeking, when you stop trying, when you relax into it and when you let go. Understand that your thoughts are not logical or connected. One thought does not lead to another. Each is independent. We connect one thought with another and create shafts of pain and pleasure or shafts of fear and greed. Instead of witnessing the thought in the present moment and letting it go, we extend it to the past or future.

Once you understand this truth, you move naturally into the present. I call this being in the 'unclutched' state, the state of *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.



Consciousness and Conscience

13.4 Understand my summary of this field of activity and how it is constituted; what its changes are, how it is produced,

Who that knower of the field of activities is, and what his influences are.

13.5 That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages in the scriptures.

It is presented with all reasoning as to cause and effect.

13.6,7 The field of activities and its interactions are said to be: the five elements of nature, false ego, intelligence, the mind, the formless, the ten senses of perception and action, as well as

The five objects of senses and desire, hatred, happiness, distress, the aggregate, the life symptoms, and convictions.

Krishna asks Arjuna to listen carefully to His explanation of what constitutes *kṣetra* - body-mind, and its activities, its changes, and how they are produced. These truths have been explained by many *ṛṣis*, sages, from time to time. The *vedic* scriptures, the Brahma Sutras for example, express these truths with clarity, using sharp reasoning.

Thousands of years of research done by millions of inner scientists, *ṛṣis*, in millions of inner science laboratories have led to the same truth: The true nature of man is pure consciousness, *kṣetrajñya*, and man is the knower or witness of the field, *kṣetra*, the body-mind.

Again and again throughout this chapter, Krishna cautions Arjuna not to confuse the body with the knower of the body and not to confuse the mind with the knower of the mind. The whole problem arises when we mix the knower of the field with the field itself.

We have forgotten that we have taken this body and mind for a purpose and that is to live our desires, *saṁskāras*. We have forgotten that we have only rented this body-mind costume for this birth and we gradually associate ourselves with it! After a while, this costume becomes more important and dear to us than anything else. Once the costume begins to wear out, we start to worry.

Actually it is not our fault. Society has applied layers of conditioning on us and has fooled us into believing that we are this body and mind. From childhood, we are told that we are this body-mind entity. This body and mind is given a name also. After a few years, we start to relate with that name as well. We identify ourselves with that name, with our profession, with our friends and with our relatives, 'My name is so-and-so, I am the son of so-and-so, and I am a doctor.'

It is like a parcel with many stamps on it. If I send a parcel from here to Tiruvannamalai, a town in South India, it gets stamped at the post office before it is sent out. Similarly, it gets a stamp at all the stops along the way. By the time it reaches Tiruvannamalai it is full of these stamps. Now the parcel thinks it is the stamps on the outside cover. It has forgotten that it is the stuff inside!

This is what happens when we associate ourselves with the body and mind, instead of associating with the consciousness that runs it. We have forgotten that we are the stuff, *kṣetrajñya*. We are not the stamps, *kṣetra*. We confuse *kṣetrajñya* with *kṣetra*. Naturally, all the problems that arise at the body-mind level start to affect us. The activities that happen to the body-mind appear to be having a direct influence on our lives.

In the next few verses, Krishna takes Arjuna step-by-step into what these activities are and how they interact with each other.

Krishna talks about the five great elements, the false ego, the intelligence or the mind that makes decisions and all ten senses. Please understand, He says, 'ten senses,' *indriyāṇi daśakam ca*. We think we have five senses. No. We have five *karmendriya* and five *jñānendriya*. *karmendriya* are the senses or organs responsible for actions such as talking, walking etc and they are the mouth, hands and feet, organs of excretion and reproduction. *jñānendriya* are our five senses that receive knowledge such as smell, taste, sight, touch, and hearing and they are the nose,

tongue, eyes, skin and ear. So, all the ten senses, plus attachment, aversion, joy, sorrow, the body, mutual attraction and the consciousness contribute to the field of activities.

Actually the word 'consciousness' cannot be used. When our consciousness becomes rigid, it becomes conscience. There's a difference between conscience and consciousness.

For example, we do something based upon what we think is right or wrong according to our conscience. If we give these same teachings to the next generation, it will not work because something else may be right or wrong for them. When we force them to follow the same thing that we did, we are giving it as just a morality, as just a conscience. We are giving them a law without the spirit. On the other hand, when we give them understanding about life, when we give our next generation an understanding about life, we give them consciousness.

Please be very clear that a person with only conscience always suffers. He can never be happy, whether he enjoys or renounces. If he enjoys, he suffers from guilt. If he renounces, he feels the lack of it. He suffers either way. Never give conscience to the next generation. Always give them an understanding about life, what I call consciousness. Let them experience and explore.

I do not believe in morality. I believe in conscious experience.

I do not believe in conscientiousness. I believe in consciousness.

Conscience is given to us by society. Consciousness is given to us by God.

Conscience is social conditioning. Consciousness is our very nature.

Conscience naturally makes our whole life into a ritual. We should know what we are doing before doing anything. Only then will we do it intensely. If we do not know the logic behind what we are doing, we will not put ourselves completely into it and dedicate ourselves to it.

Krishna says that the rigid sense of conscience, all the rules that form the *kṣetra*, are also the field. They are matter. They are not energy. They are not your being. They are not you. Whatever is mentioned here is not you. We should understand we are liberated the moment we know what we are not. We are liberated even if we live with what is not us. Even if we live with our body-mind, if we know that we are not the body and the mind, then we are not their slaves to it!

Please understand that the word 'slavery' can be used as long as something goes against your will. With awareness, even if you live with the body-mind, you are not their slave.

Let me tell you a small story about the life of a Greek sage named Diogenes.

Diogenes was an enlightened master. A group of people plotted against him and attacked him. He did not react as they had expected. They went prepared to capture him and expected him to retaliate. They were shocked at his response.

He maintained his composure and asked his attackers, 'What do you want?' He asked them like a master.

The attackers were shaken. One of them said that they wanted to capture him and sell him in the slave market.

Diogenes replied, 'Oh, you should have told me that straightaway. Why did you waste your time making plans and discussing? Come, put on the handcuffs. Where are they?'

The attackers were completely taken aback. For the first time they saw a man ordering them to handcuff him! He spoke like a master when he asked them to put the handcuffs on. Finally, they somehow took out the handcuffs, cuffed his wrist on one side, and locked their own hands on the other side.

Diogenes said, 'Fools, why are you tying up yourselves? Don't you believe me? I was the one who gave the order to handcuff me. Come, let us go wherever you want to take me and sell me. But be very clear, don't run away from me.'

The people who caught him were now slightly frightened. They couldn't understand what was going on. Slowly, they started feeling small and inadequate themselves. Diogenes said, 'Fools, I know the technique of freedom. I know the basic rules of freedom. I constantly experience tremendous inner freedom. Nothing can bind me. Try your best to play your game and let's see where it leads.'

Saying thus, he walked onto the road like a king. His captors followed behind like slaves.

He told the people who were standing on the road and looking at the curious sight, 'They are my slaves because they cannot leave me.' They retorted that Diogenes was the slave.

He replied, 'See, even now if you leave me, I will run away. But now I am letting you go. Can you run away? I am setting you free from this handcuff. Will you run away?' He continued, 'You won't. You need something from me and that makes you my slaves, whereas I want nothing from you. Therefore, I am the master! I am liberated.'

You may not be handcuffed physically but still you can be a slave by attitude. Slavery is related to the being and not the body.

They took him to the market. Straightaway, he walked to the table where slaves are sold. The auction began. The auctioneer called out, 'Here is a slave. Bidders are welcome and the highest bidder can claim him.'

Diogenes at that point said, 'Stop! Don't say, *Here is a slave*. Say instead, *Here is a master*. If you can afford to bid on him, come.' Nobody dared to bid for a master and therefore nobody bought him. After three days his captors felt burdened that they had to unnecessarily feed him, knowing that nobody would buy him. They felt, 'If we continue to sit here he may sell us. We don't know what he is capable of.'

So they set him free.

This may be a story. Yet the truth behind the story is that nothing can enslave us once we understand that we are not body and mind. We can never become a slave to anything. Even slavery cannot enslave us. Slavery can enslave us as long as we are not ready to cooperate with slavery. This is a subtle point. When we understand that we are beyond body and mind, we will feel no need to resist when somebody tries to enslave us. We know that we can never be slaves.

Only that which goes against our will can enslave us. Here we are in a totally different space, a totally different consciousness, and nothing can go against our will. And we will never have a will that would make us feel like a slave. We will be flowing with the river, flowing with the current. We will disappear into the Divine. So slavery cannot happen to us. Our consciousness is beyond any form of slavery.

That is why Krishna teaches the secret of understanding the body-mind and consciousness, *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajāñya*. In ancient times, man was only subjected to physical slavery. In the present day, man is subjected to psychological slavery. Understand, we are the psychological slaves of countless things.

When some product is advertised on television, straightaway it sits in our head. Within a few days, we somehow get money and buy that product. We live in a world of psychological slavery. Once we understand that we are not the body-mind, that we are beyond it, we will be totally free from physical and psychological slavery.

See, it is like this. When we badly want a particular object or event to happen, our happiness is in the hands of that object or event. That external object or event has the power to control our happiness. We feel depressed when things turn out other than the way we desired. We feel the world is unfair. Many people ask me, 'Why has God been so unfair to me? Why is it that only I face these difficulties?' Please understand, the moment you place your happiness in the hands of something or someone, you have become their slave. They can exploit you.

One more thing is that even the thought of wanting freedom can exploit us if we allow it. Many times we chase freedom in the name of spiritual seeking. Freedom happens only when we realize that there is no need to chase. We must drop the idea of wanting freedom and just trust the freedom. We will then experience it. Otherwise, craving for freedom can enslave us. We realize the futility of this struggle and experience freedom only when we become aware that we are already free.

The minute we accept whatever we have, we start flowing and stop resisting. We stop giving someone or something the power to control our happiness. Nothing will enslave us. We will experience the consciousness of freedom.

Q: Swamiji, is the difference between religion and spirituality the difference between conscience and consciousness?

You have got it! That is exactly it!

Please understand that when Moses met his master, the Ten Commandments came out as the metaphorical explanation of his spiritual experience. With his spiritual transformation, he became aware of nonviolence, non-covetousness, and the other points of the commandments. They were not mere words or instructions; they were the beautiful outpouring and expression of how an enlightened being lives. These became his consciousness as a result of merging with his master.

Because these truths became his conviction following his experience, Moses could follow them. A few people close to him understood what he had experienced and were also able to follow these truths. Therefore, for them as well, these were expressions of their consciousness.

Until the experience happens, the expressions remain mere rules. Instead of being liberating truths that they had been for the one who expressed them, they become bondages for those who follow them. They become rules of conscience. They degenerate from spiritual truths to religious dogma.

The Hindu culture, *Sanātana dharma*, the eternal path of righteousness, clearly differentiates between expressions of spirituality and the rules and regulations of religion and society. Truths are the *śruti* and rules are *smṛti*. *Sruti* are experienced truths of great masters and *smṛti* are the regulators of conscience. There is a clear injunction that *smṛti* can be changed based upon time and space.

Krishna tells Arjuna elsewhere in the Bhagavad Gita that the mere reading of the scriptures does not lead to Him, i.e., to enlightenment. The scriptures, the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and Gita need to be experienced in the inner space. They need to become the truths of the individual. Then and only then, can they become your consciousness, your own spiritual truths.

Otherwise they remain no better than any other rule and regulation. Men and women are conditioned to break rules and regulations. They will break rules whenever they get the chance. However, when it becomes a part of one's experience, one's inner spiritual experience, living by these truths will become blissful.



Inner Science Technology

13.8-12 Humility, absence of pride, nonviolence, tolerance, simplicity, service to an enlightened spiritual master, cleanliness, steadiness and self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense gratification; absence of ego, the perception of the pain of the cycle of birth and death, old age and disease;

Nonattachment to children, wife, home and the rest, and even-mindedness amid pleasant and unpleasant events; constant and unalloyed devotion to Me, resorting to solitary places, detachment from the general mass of people; accepting the importance of self realization, and philosophical search for the absolute truth:

All these I thus declare to be knowledge and anything contrary to these is ignorance.

In these five verses, Krishna gives a beautiful technique. Until this point He gave us an intellectual understanding. Now He gives the technique and technology to realize and experience what He says. I call these five verses the inner science technology to liberate our inner space! It is a precise technique to liberate oneself from the *kṣetra*. It talks about how to be liberated from the body-mind and how to bring them under our control.

First, the moment we understand that we are more powerful than the body-mind, we are liberated from the body and the mind. Here, He beautifully gives the technique to liberate us from the body-mind and therefore, how to experience the consciousness.

Let me first give the translation of the verses:

Humility, non-violence, tolerance, simplicity, approaching the bonafide spiritual master, cleanliness, steadfastness, self-control, renunciation of the objects of sense gratification, absence of all egos, perception of all the evils of birth and death, old

age and diseases, detachment, freedom from all entanglements, even-mindedness amidst pleasant and unpleasant events, constant devotion, aspiring to live in a spiritual way, giving importance to the ultimate truth, and detachment. All these I declare to be knowledge and besides these, whatever there may be, is ignorance.

Krishna mentions a long list of things in these verses with many instructions. Let me be very clear that if we straightaway try to practice all the qualities He has given here, we will feel we are going mad! We cannot really practice these qualities. All we can do is help the consciousness to happen in us so that we start radiating these qualities. These qualities simply happen in us.

By way of comparison, let us say we want to remove the dirt from a muddy water tank. If we put our hands into the tank and try to take away the mud, what happens? We make it muddier, that's all. All the dirt that is settled below will come up to the surface. Instead, if we sprinkle a handful of lime powder inside the tank, it will absorb the dirt and we can have clean water in the tank.

Our mind is also like a muddy tank. If we try to suppress it and fight with it, we will create more trouble. Instead just add a little meditation which is like the lime powder, and relax. Just put in your awareness and relax. Automatically the impurities will settle down. The moment we become aware and the witnessing consciousness starts operating, the whole thing settles down. The witnessing consciousness is the lime powder that purifies our being.

Usually when we read scriptures and books, we start executing them straightaway! For example, if it says, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself,' we start executing it without understanding. The first difficulty is that we don't understand that we don't love ourselves. And we don't understand that we cannot love somebody unless we first love ourselves. Next, we must have the mood or consciousness from which the loving happens naturally. Love happens as an automatic process.

The minute we impose love on others, it becomes a business transaction. We only know the contaminated version of love. Pure love is not about loving for security or with some other expectation of return. Pure love is an expression of the being. It just happens. If we are true to our being, true to our core, that is enough. Straightaway we will be liberated.

Ramakrishna says that if the straight line of honesty connects your mouth and mind, you will be liberated. We cheat ourselves if we engage in an activity because it is appreciated by society and not because we feel it from within. This constant mismatch of internal and external, of what we feel deep within and what we do, creates problems.

Instead of creating consciousness, we start creating the activity. Instead of working on our being, we work on our doing. Our doing is in no way going to help us. Only our being is going to help us. So work on the being and not on the doing. A person who works on his doing may continuously chisel, chisel and chisel his doing; however, his being will face the same old struggle, suppression, suffering, and fighting. Instead, if we work on our being, we will flower and automatically radiate the right energy, the right consciousness!

Patanjali, a great, enlightened master from India spoke on Ashtanga Yoga, the eight limbs that come together for yoga to happen, for the ultimate consciousness to flower. One limb talks about practices like non-violence and truthfulness. If we practice these qualities just because Patanjali or Krishna say that we should, the qualities will never really develop in us. They will remain skin deep. When true non-violence happens, our very being will radiate love, no matter what. Even if an enemy were to stand in front of us, no other emotion but love would remain in us, and that is what Krishna really wants.

If we visit Sringeri, a temple in South India, we will see a stone statue of a snake protecting a frog with its hood. A beautiful sight! It depicts that emotion of divine love that is unconditional. Divine love does not consider whether a person is a friend or enemy. If we are centered in our being, qualities of love and non-violence happen. It is an expression of our being. All the things that Krishna has mentioned in these five verses are an outcome of the flowering of that consciousness, and not things to be practiced. If we practice them to please somebody else, we would become slaves to the people around us.

In the story of Diogenes, we notice that he never became a slave even though people thought that by handcuffing him he would become their slave. He radiated his inner energy, the pure consciousness. If we live like that, expressing our inner energy, we can never become a slave even if others think we are one.

Normally we believe others' opinions about us. We accept their scale as a standard for measuring ourselves. Then we get into trouble. This is what I call 'guilt'. Guilt is reviewing our past decisions with updated intelligence. If we use our present intelligence to review our past decisions, we create guilt and suffering.

Please be very clear that we are updated every second. We are not the same as what we were a few hours ago. Our intelligence is continuously updated. So naturally when we look back and analyze what happened in the past we feel certain things could have been avoided. The problem is that we think we are responsible for everything. We think we run the show. We take everything upon

our shoulders and allow emotions like guilt and worry to come in. If we remember that the universe is pure Intelligence that knows how to take care of our lives, we will simply relax. Also, when we allow the cosmic intelligence to operate, we spontaneously express the beautiful qualities that Krishna enumerates. The same cannot be achieved by doing anything.

Krishna first talks about humility or *amānitvam*. Humility can never be achieved by effort. If it is attempted through effort, it looks ugly. Humility happens when we feel that every being is unique. It does not come by thinking that everyone is equal. There are no equals! If we deeply understand that every being is unique, we automatically respect everyone. Every being has something that he contributes to Existence, to life.

One important thing that you must know is that even our enemy contributes to our growth! He may do it indirectly but nevertheless, he contributes to our growth. Never think that a person is useless. If he were, he would have been removed from planet earth long ago. We are removed from planet earth the moment we stop contributing to Existence in some way or other. We are here as long as we contribute.

Normally we evaluate whether a person is worthy of our respect. We have our own scales to measure this. We will see how well qualified he is, how much society respects him. Then we will decide, 'Okay, I think I can show him some respect.' It is as though our respect is so precious and the world continues to run because of that! When we understand that every being is a unique creation of the universe, that the same divinity that is in us is in them also, we automatically radiate humility and the absence of pride. All these qualities that are supposed to be radiated by a seeker should simply happen from within. This is what Krishna explains.

Another important thing: How should we approach a bona fide spiritual master or *ācāryopāsana*? He talks about this in another verse also:

tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā

It means that we should approach the master with questions and request him to answer the questions. Why? Why does Krishna say that? What is the need? Again and again, spiritual literature repeatedly emphasizes the master. It is not only in the Bhagavad Gita. Whether it is Zen Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Islam or Christianity, again and again the master plays an important role. Why? Especially in *Vedānta*, the *vedic* system, the master plays a major role. Why?

Unless we see someone continuously living in the consciousness and continuously expressing that consciousness, our unconscious refuses to believe it is possible. Whenever we read about these truths and hear about them, our conscious mind believes in them, but the unconscious says, 'All these things are old theories! Some crazy person might have written all these things!' Our unconscious mind won't accept the truth and possibility of enlightenment. Our head and heart fight with each other because of this. Our intellect says, 'No, no, no! These are all truths.' Logically we are convinced but emotionally we are unable to experience it.

When we see a living master, our emotions also automatically start experiencing it. Our unconscious, which continuously questions, becomes silent when we see a living master. With books we learn through verbal language; with a master we learn through his body language. He is a living example that proves the truth. He proves that these things can become a reality for us in our life. When they say this, we don't need to believe at a superficial level; it becomes a solid experience that touches us deeply.

Three things happen when we meet an enlightened master:

First, we see in front of our own eyes that it is possible to live in eternal bliss or in bliss consciousness all 24 hours of the day. The assurance and inspiration to achieve that state is there. We understand the possibility. Next we ask, 'All right, it is possible for the master. But is it possible for *me*?' That assurance is also given when we reach the master.

The master instills the confidence in us by showing us, 'If I can achieve, why not you?'

It is like this: the seed is afraid to sprout and thinks, 'I may die if I rupture and sprout.' But the tree says, 'No, you must break open. Only when you break open can I happen.' The tree within the seed is waiting for the seed to break so that it can come out, but the seed is waiting for the tree to happen! The seed thinks, 'Who knows whether the tree will happen?' The tree says, 'Open, only then can I happen,' and the seed tells the tree, 'No, let me see you happen and only then will I open.'

A master represents the tree in the analogy. In our life too, we are afraid to jump because we look for a guarantee that enlightenment is possible if we take the jump. We are afraid of being caught in an 'in-between situation'! Then neither would we become enlightened nor would we be able to return to our normal lives. We are afraid of the insecurity and uncertainty. But the master offers this guarantee.

A small story:

A journalist interviews a candidate for the presidential election. While delivering his speech earlier, the candidate had claimed that he could see that his future was bright. So the journalist asked him during the interview, 'If that is so, why do you look worried?'

The candidate said, 'My certainty doesn't come with a warranty. I am optimistic but it is not a guarantee!'

We too are stuck in this way! We are optimistic that we may have the experience. At the same time we are afraid to take the risk.

The master has already become a tree. He gives confidence to the disciple. He says, 'Don't worry. I also struggled like you. Look at me, I have flowered. I have not died. I have become a tree. If you open, you will also become a tree.' He sits with us and assures us that he will take care. He creates the energy and gives confidence to open and become a tree. He reminds us, 'When I have achieved, why not you?'

Third, the master creates the right space or technology for the tree to happen. He creates the right conditions, the right soil, water, etc. All that we need to do is trust the master and break open. That is why masters create *ashrams*. An *ashram* is a space that allows us to break open. The seed can open and the tree can happen. It is similar to an operation theatre where you go, open, become a tree and start radiating the experience. The ashram is a space where the conditions are controlled, and in a secure and safe way we can enter into the consciousness.

The master makes us experience the truth which is in our very being. So first, he assures us of the possibility through his body language. Next, he makes us understand that it is possible for us also. Third, he creates a space in which it can happen. Fourth, he ensures that we are established in that consciousness. These are the responsibilities of a master. That is why the *vedic* system, the *vedic* way of life, insists again and again that we reach a living enlightened master. This is what Krishna calls *ācāryopāśana*. He gives the important guidelines for us to experiment with the technology.

Q: If you say that the attributes listed by Krishna can only be reached through enlightenment, what hope is there for us to be enlightened? Even if the master guides us how do we move?

Krishna says that these qualities outlined in earlier verses comprise true knowledge; the rest is ignorance. These qualities are not goals and cannot be treated as goals. The path to travel for the spontaneous unfolding of these qualities is what is important, not any perception of where you are on that path and what standard you have achieved.

If you are caught in the game of ‘I am more humble than that person,’ or ‘That person knows more about life and death than me,’ and so on, you will be caught in comparison. You will not move forward.

You do not need to achieve anything to be enlightened. Enlightenment is your natural state. You cannot work towards it as if it is an external object. Enlightenment needs to be realized. This realization comes about as you disengage from negativities and move towards positive attributes. These negativities include many aspects of your ego that project themselves as attachments, desires, regrets, guilt, etc. The positive attributes are those that Krishna has outlined.

Let us take a real-life case. You have a friend who has become successful in business and is now very wealthy. Your first response is envy. You wonder, ‘Why has he become wealthy, why not me?’ One more consideration is ‘How can I benefit from his success?’ At the back of your mind you feel guilty, thinking you should not have these thoughts and feelings.

All these emotions that force your actions arise out of one basic thing: You borrow desires from others because you think they get pleasure from their possessions or status. Even if others enjoy what they have, those possessions and status may not be right for you and may not give you the same pleasure. But still you compare and desire and make yourself and others suffer. You need to understand what your own essential needs are in order to become free of negativities such as comparison, fear and greed.

Krishna says that fulfillment of these genuine needs must be carried out without attachment to the results. You need to focus on the path of fulfillment, not the end result or outcome. As you move with this understanding, these positive qualities that Krishna has outlined happen automatically.

Guidance from a living master makes your path smoother and shorter. With courage and determination you can travel this path alone, without a master. That has been done. But, why do you want to torment yourself unnecessarily?

One disciple said to me, ‘See how much smarter we are than you! You had to struggle alone, not being smart enough to follow a master. We have you and our lives are so much simpler!’



Consciousness Is Eternal

13.13 I shall give you the full understanding about the knowable, with which one can taste eternal bliss or the being or the consciousness that has no beginning.

A life beyond the law of cause, effect and the material world.

13.14 With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the worlds, enveloping all.

*The **Paramātman** (supreme spirit) is all pervading. He exists everywhere.*

*13.15 The **Paramātman** is the original source of all the senses. Yet, He is beyond all the senses. He is unattached.*

Although the consciousness is the maintainer of all the living beings, yet He transcends the modes of nature and at the same time He is the master of the modes of our material nature.

13.16 The supreme Truth exists both internally and externally, in the moving and nonmoving. It is beyond the power of the material senses to see or to know Him.

Although far, far away, He is also near to all.

*13.17 Although the **Paramātman** appears to be divided, He is never divided. He is situated as one.*

Although He is the maintainer of every living entity, it is to be understood that He consumes and creates all.

13.18 He is the source of light in all luminous objects. He is beyond the darkness of matter and is formless.

He is knowledge, He is the object of knowledge, and He is the goal of knowledge. He is situated in everyone's heart.

Krishna says, 'I shall explain the knowable, knowing which, you will taste the eternal Being, the beginning-less consciousness that lies beyond the causes and effects of this material world.' In the previous verses, Krishna talks about the qualities that happen with the flowering of the divine consciousness within. Now He reveals to Arjuna that this consciousness is eternal.

Please understand that our mind associates a time and space with every incident or event. The mind can only think chronologically. It is like an inner reference chart and all incidents are placed in this chart of time and space. Modern science asks questions like, 'How did this happen? What was there before this? What came after this? What triggered this?' When they asked about the creation of this universe, they explained it with the Big Bang theory.

They said that a tiny mass of fire exploded and gave rise to our universe. What they could not answer was, 'What existed before that?' Krishna says that this universal energy, the ultimate consciousness, always existed. It manifested in various forms as planets, as humans and so on, but it is eternal. It will continue to manifest itself and return to the Source and it will always exist.

The concept of time and space that we have is based on our mind and senses. Whatever we perceive is a projection of our mind. This understanding of time is different from an enlightened master's understanding. He measures time in terms of *kṣaṇa*. *Kṣaṇa* is the time between two thoughts. It is the space between two thoughts. Buddha referred to this time and space as *śūnya*. Adi Shankaracharya referred to it as *pūrṇa*. It is the no-mind zone, the mindful zone, in which we touch base with ourselves. It is the present moment, in which we come face to face with the divinity within, by which we recognize the cosmic energy that is our essential nature.

When we are caught in chasing one material pleasure after another we have so much stress, tension and worry bombarding our heads every second. Our *kṣaṇa* is very small because of the high number of thoughts inside us. This is why we get a suffocated, panicking feeling. We are running in a rat race. We constantly feel time is running out. We are greedy for more and more experiences before this body dies and we are afraid that we might lose whatever we have come to possess.

We feel this way because we associate ourselves with the *kṣetra*, the temporary body and mind. Please understand that the body and mind are made up of the five elements and they return to their source once they have served their purpose.

On the other hand, an enlightened master knows he is *kṣetrajñya*. He knows that he is not the body-mind system. He has realized that he is the ultimate consciousness. He has no urgency to run in the rat race because he knows that life goes on, even if this body perishes. He has become a witness to the mind. Any thought that springs up will be only an action-oriented thought, never an unproductive thought. The moment the thought happens, it will immediately expresses itself as an action. No thoughts accumulate inside him. He experiences eternity because of this thoughtless zone that he stays in.

This is the beginninglessness of the consciousness that Krishna explains here.

When we are in front of an enlightened master, one who is in a no-mind state, the number of thoughts in us also comes down and our *kṣaṇa* becomes longer. The gaps between thoughts increase. So without even trying, we become calmer, more peaceful, and more aware!

Our logical mind tries to reason everything out. We rationally want to convince ourselves all the time about why each thing is in a particular way. But all our logical understanding and all our knowledge through books only gives information about the changing world around us. The knowable that Krishna explains is beyond these changes. It is eternal because it does not follow the laws of creation and destruction like other objects around us. It has always been there and will always continue to exist.

Whatever physical matter we see around us follows a particular cause-effect relationship. However, our deepest core is untouched by these changes. Please understand that every thought inside us affects the functioning of the whole cosmos. Whether we want to accept it or not, we do not operate as separate islands. Thoughts that are present in the space that we live in affect our mental setup, that is the way we think and operate.

If you search on the internet for the book title 'The Hidden Messages in Water,' you can read the research findings of Masaru Emoto, a Japanese scientist, on samples of water. He took many samples from the same water source and started talking to each sample with a different emotion. He labeled one sample 'love' and spoke words of love to it. Similarly, he labeled another sample 'hate' and spoke with vengeance and violence to it. He later crystallized these samples and observed them under an electron microscope. The sample labeled 'love' showed beautiful crystals that sparkled. The one labeled 'hate' was ugly and repelling.

If one man's thoughts could have so much impact on a small sample of water, can you imagine what impact the collective emotions of humanity have on the

universe? Today there is a rise in the collective unconscious, the collective negativity. The universe responds to that. People ask me, 'Swamiji, why did the *tsunami* kill so many innocent people?' Please understand that these natural disasters are a projection of our collective unconscious, in the form of earthquakes, *tsunami*, wars and other forms of mass destruction.

In exactly the same way, collective consciousness does mass-purifying. It is not to say that those who were killed were impure. It is that the total collective negativity must get expressed somehow, somewhere, through these natural events. That is why sages and yogis started the concept of *Kumbh Mela* where the energy of millions of enlightened beings comes together in the waters of the sacred rivers Ganga and Yamuna. Imagine the purification process that occurs when the enlightened energy of millions of masters touches the waters of these rivers. It has a counter-balancing effect. That is why taking a dip in the Ganga during *Kumbh Mela* bears so much significance.

Last year, on September 21st, the United Nations World Peace Day, the worldwide centers of the Nithyananda Mission organized twenty-four hour meditation rallies for world peace. The concept is the same: When thoughts with the intention of peace and harmony come together, it results in a sweet mood of peace and adds to the collective positive consciousness of planet Earth.

This positivity and negativity, creation and destruction, are all properties of the changing world around us, of the *kṣetra* that we live in. The minute we know that we are not this changing *kṣetra* but the eternal and unmoving *kṣetrajñya* (the consciousness that runs the *kṣetra*), we are liberated.

Krishna calls this eternal bliss *jñeya*, knowable. When the knowing happens, the knowable (*jñeya*), knower (*jñātā*), and the knowledge (*jñāna*) merge. In this experience, the knower, known, and knowledge become one. No separate experience, experiencer or object of experience exists. It is called *triputi*, where no difference between the three entities exists.

It is like this: Imagine that you love driving and are sitting in a nice new car with all automatic systems and you are driving on a highway at full speed. You are so immersed in that joy of driving the car that you forget yourself. After some time you suddenly realize you are not even driving; the driving is simply happening. You have become the experience of driving and there is no more a sense of you doing the driving. The car is moving forward on its own and you have become the experience. Similarly, if you are immersed and involved deeply in any other passion, the experience, experiencer and object of experience suddenly merge into the eternal consciousness. You call it being 'in the Zone.'

Krishna explained that His eternal nature, the eternal Self, is not bound by time. Now He says that He exists everywhere and He is not bound by space. Normally we understand the presence or absence of an object or person in terms of physical attributes. We function in our lives based upon what we see, smell, touch, taste and hear. If our *pañca indriya*, five senses, cannot sense anything, we think nothing exists.

One important and surprising thing is that an enlightened master is more present in his absence than in his physical presence. This means that his energy never dies nor does it know any barriers. Many disciples in different parts of the world tell me, 'Swamiji, we wish to be with you more often, please visit us.' I tell them, 'Truly, sixty six percent of Nithyananda is in the mission and the message; only thirty three percent is in this body.' If we limit an enlightened master to his form, we miss him completely. His energy transcends time and space and is always available everywhere forever!

When you are in the energy field of an enlightened master who is no longer in his body, as in a *jīva samādhi*, the final resting place of the master's body, without even making an effort, you become calmer and experience that space of peace within. Many great temples such as Tirupati, Tiruvannamalai, Mantralaya and Pazhani in India are built around the final resting places of enlightened masters. That is why these places serve as powerful energy centers today, drawing millions of people every year.

Although physically the master is no longer in the body, we feel his presence. Why? Because he is not bound in space by the body. The cosmic energy that he manifests transcends space and time. Only we know physical barriers. Here, Krishna uses the phrase, 'eyes everywhere.'

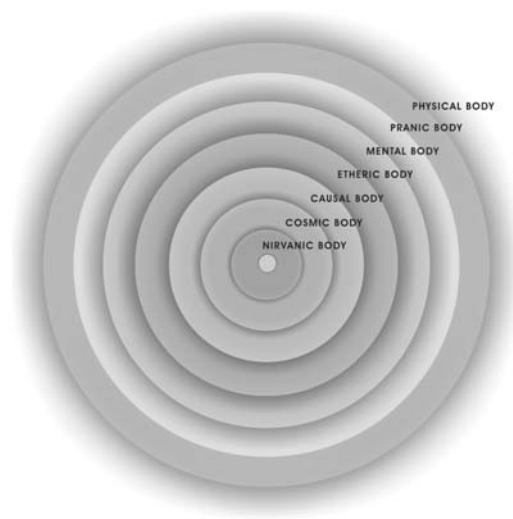
During my *parivrājaka* (monastic wandering), I had a wonderful opportunity to stay and learn with a great mystic in the Himalayas, a *Naga Baba*. *Naga Baba* refers to those from the *Naga* sect. Those belonging to this sect would not wear any clothing. This *baba* had a unique method of teaching. Whenever people came to learn from him, he would stick his trident (a weapon with three prongs believed to be used by Lord Shiva), in the ground and ask them to look at all three tips of the trident simultaneously. Sometimes his students would sit for three months staring at the trident all day, trying to perfect themselves. It is much harder than it appears to be! For one moment you can see one tip in your vision, and the next moment the next tip, and the next moment the third tip. It is very difficult to see all three tips at the same time! I first thought it would be easy! But when I started practicing, I was shocked. I thought, 'Oh God, I can't even see this small trident

entirely, all at once!’ Only then did I understand that without moving the eyeballs, without shifting the gaze, we couldn’t see more than one point.

The trident is a great weapon to create awareness of the third eye (the energy centre between the eyebrows). It is a tool to expand our awareness. Right now, your field of vision is 120 degrees. If you start concentrating on one particular point, it will slowly become 30 degrees. The more you concentrate, the narrower the field of vision becomes. However, if you center yourself on the third eye, your awareness will slowly expand beyond 120 degrees, and you will first see 180 degrees, then 240 degrees, and ultimately 360 degrees! To create awareness by centering yourself on the third eye means awakening your consciousness.

When Krishna says, ‘Hands and feet everywhere, eyes, head, ears and mouths everywhere,’ what does He mean?

This is beyond the comprehension of the human mind and needs a little bit of internalization. We understand only one body - the physical body - because we associate ourselves with it completely. Let me explain with a small diagram:



This diagram shows the seven energy bodies or layers that we have in us. The outermost layer is the physical layer, with which we associate ourselves all the time. We know this body as having a pair of eyes, hands, legs, one nose, head, etc. Now let us take a few points on that layer. Let us call them ‘you’, ‘me’, ‘your neighbor’, ‘Krishna’, ‘Buddha’ etc. So, at the gross layer, you are different from your neighbor; your neighbor is different from me and different from the various

forms of God. You can see each point being distinct from the others. We are so rooted in this physical gross layer and so we see many barriers between us and everything around us, because everything appears to be different from the other in this layer.

Now, for each point, if we follow the corresponding points in the inner layers, as we go deeper and deeper, we suddenly realize that we all merge in the *nirvanic* layer. It is here that the universal energy connects every being. There is no difference in this space between you and me. This is the space of consciousness that Krishna talks about. Here, Krishna and Buddha are no different. All are various forms of God, all are manifestations of the same divinity.

The women who used to look after the cowherds during Krishna's time, that is the *gopīs*, were great devotees of Krishna. Despite their other household chores, they were soaked in devotion for Krishna all the time. It is said in the *rās līlā* - divine play of Krishna wherein he gave the experience of universal consciousness to the *gopīs* - that Krishna danced with each of the hundred thousand *gopīs* in Brindavan. Krishna manifested a form for each of the *gopīs* in order to dance with them individually. It was not merely one form, one body of Krishna, but one hundred thousand forms manifesting simultaneously.

Please understand the deeper meaning in this. Each *gopī* was so deeply connected with that divine consciousness, the Krishna consciousness, that each one felt His presence. When we go within, into our core, we see divinity in everything. The *gopīs* saw Krishna everywhere and in everything they did. This universal consciousness knows no physical barriers. That is why Krishna says He is 'all pervading'. He is all enveloping. He is omnipresent.

That is why I say, 'All those who I ordain as healers are my hands, all our *ācāryas* (teachers) are my *vāk* (energy of verbal expression), and all our organizers are my mind.' I can only heal a limited number of people with these two physical hands. I can only conduct a limited number of discourses and programs with this one mouth, and I can only organize a limited number of events with this one brain. That is why I operate through my healers, teachers and organizers. The cosmic Nithyananda operates through them!

For a phone connection to happen from one country to another, we need to have the infrastructure: all the cables installed below the sea and so forth. But for this cosmic connection to happen, nothing is needed. If we simply connect to the Self within, suddenly there will be no barriers. We will simply fly!

Krishna goes on to give further qualities of the Self. But understand that all this is said only to inspire us to experience it first hand ourselves. If somebody asks us, 'What does sugar taste like?' and if he has never tasted anything sweet before, how will you explain to him? You may tell him, 'It will be in the form of white cubes, transparent, very sweet.' When he asks, 'What does 'sweet' mean?', what will you say? You can continue to tell him other things about it, 'Sugar is made from sugar cane. Sugar cane is full of sugary syrup, it is fibrous, you can chew on it.' What is the use?

Instead if he puts a handful of sugar in his mouth, he will automatically say, 'This is how sugar tastes! This is how something sweet tastes!' Unless he experiences what 'sweet' means, things will remain a theory for him, although the conviction about sugar might grow in him.

But the problem for intellectuals is that they are clouded with doubts and skepticism so a theoretical explanation is important. We want to measure everything based on what we know. Krishna is compassionate. He is patient.

In Chapter 11, He revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form, the *viśvarūpa darśan*. But soon after that, Arjuna feels intimidated and cannot handle the energy. He pleads with Krishna, 'I cannot understand You. I cannot withstand Your glory.' But Arjuna wants to know what Krishna is talking about. So once again Krishna gives all kinds of descriptions to penetrate Arjuna's doubts and fears.

The compassion of an enlightened master is so great. In spite of the doubts and skepticism, he quietly and patiently sits with the disciple until, one by one, all doubts are washed away. You see, our doubts and questions arise from our mind, forming a thick layer over us. A master's grace gently dissolves this layer.

Let me narrate an incident that happened in Buddha's life:

A blind man argued with everyone that there is no such thing as light. If someone said that there was light, he would ask that person to catch hold of it and give it to him. He said, 'If there is something called light, I want to touch it, taste it, go around it, play with it. Only then will I believe that there is light.' He argued with everyone until they gave up and accepted that he was right.

One day he went to Buddha. Buddha did not argue with him. Without a word, Buddha asked a doctor to examine and treat him. The blind man received his vision. As soon as he could see, the blind man's joy knew no

bounds. He enjoyed seeing all the colors. Then he brought some flowers and fruits and offered them at the feet of Buddha and prostrated.

The blind man spoke from the depths of his heart, 'O Lord Buddha! Blindly I have been arguing with everybody. Others also argued with me and destroyed me. It is good that you have not argued with me. If you also had argued, I too would have argued with you and I might have been ruined. But now I understand that light exists.'

Out of the same compassion that Buddha had for the blind man, Krishna explains to Arjuna the same truth in many ways so that something might trigger the spark inside. In this verse, He says that He is responsible for the functioning of all senses but is beyond them. He is responsible for any life that happens, but is detached from it. He is the one who causes the three main qualities of aggression, laziness and goodness to happen, but is beyond all three of them.

Krishna says all life happens because of the thread of the universal energy flowing through. You see, so many things are happening around us, on their own, beyond our awareness. When we put a piece of bread in our mouth, we chew and swallow it. After that, the whole process of converting this to energy happens without our giving instructions. Forget giving instructions, we don't even know what is happening inside. Today, scientists may understand the chemical reactions, but they still don't know what differentiates a dead cell from a living cell. How then can one understand the universe and all the millions of stars and planets in the galaxies, running in perfect synchronization? Is there any policeman sitting in space and controlling them? No!

Please understand that the life force that conducts the whole show, that controls every breath we take, the same energy that maintains an order in the chaos of the universe, is pure intelligence. In Sanskrit, there is a saying that means not even a blade of grass can move without the will of the Divine.

Krishna is sending a message to us about how much we depend on Him, who is the cosmic intelligence, for anything to happen. At the same time, without getting involved, the universal energy is a witness to all activities and all life forms.

If we look deeper, we realize that whatever we see and perceive as objects, are creations of the mind along with the senses. We create a world of our own. Deep down, the true Self watches the whole thing without getting involved. Our mind reacts to a particular situation, causing pain or happiness. The mind projects some people as good, some as bad, some incident as painful, others as joyful, etc. and then runs after or away from the people and experiences.

Earlier Krishna explained about the three qualities: *Tamas* (lethargy), *rajas* (activity) and *satva* (harmony). These form the *triguṇa*, the three qualities. Any food that we eat, or action, or object can be classified as belonging to one of these categories. As long as we identify ourselves with this body and see everything in terms of names or forms, we keep classifying them, for example, we say, meditation is good, overeating is bad, etc.

For an enlightened being, a knower of the truth, everything is the same. He stops labeling because he has moved beyond names and forms, and beyond the dualities of good and bad.

Ramakrishna, an enlightened master from West Bengal, India, gives a beautiful analogy. When we stand in a valley, we see pits and depressions on the ground if we look down, and mountain cliffs when we look up. But when we climb up to the summit, we observe that all the ups and downs below no longer matter. We have transcended the ups and downs that we saw when we were on the ground.

How to climb to the summit? How to fly into the sky above all the ups and downs? You must relax. You must realize that you are already on the summit. You are beyond the ups and downs. You are beyond the three *nirguṇas*. But no, we don't want to believe it. Our mind tells us, 'No. What is he saying? I have important things to do in life. How can I relax?' We love our tensions and problems too much. We like to clutch onto our lives. We do not want to let go because we think this is all there is. We do not relax. We do not realize that if we relax, we can fly. We can become the *nirguṇas* - beyond the three qualities - that Krishna speaks about.

A small story:

A hunter in a forest came across a clearing where there were many birds. He took a twig and tied a rope at the center of the twig. Then he took the two ends of the rope and tied them firmly to a pole on each side. Now the twig was hanging by the rope. He sprinkled a few grains around the setup. He was a clever hunter. Happily, he went away for a nap.

After some time, a bird was attracted by the grains and sat on the twig. The minute it sat on one side of the twig, the whole twig turned upside down due to the bird's weight. The bird now saw the whole world upside down and became frightened. It thought it was trapped! It clasped to the twig harder than ever and prayed to God to be set free.

After an hour, the hunter returned leisurely and caught hold of the bird. After that, you know what happened.

This is what we do in our lives. The bird did not realize that it was always free! All it needed to do was let go of the twig and fly away. Instead, what did it do? It held onto the twig tighter and tighter, thinking it was trapped. We do the same thing. We grasp and clutch onto our past. We clutch onto the pains and joys and keep missing the point. We keep missing the present moment. We miss eternity. We miss our consciousness inside.

The supreme truth is inside and outside all living entities. It is moving and non-moving on account of being subtle. It is near and far. Krishna uses all these terms and concepts such as moving, non-moving, near, far, inside and outside because these are the only terms we can understand and comprehend. He is giving us an idea to tell us that supreme consciousness is beyond these concepts and terms that we know.

We always evaluate whatever we see with a fixed frame of reference, based upon a physical reference such as near, far, inside, outside, etc. Please understand that these adjectives are relative. They happen when we use a fixed set of references to compare against. What is near for somebody may be far for somebody else. What is inside of something can be outside of something else. For example, we can say that the television is inside the house and the tree is outside. However at the same time, we can say that the tree is inside that town or city. With relation to the house the tree is outside, and with relation to the city the tree is inside. So it is relative to which objects, spaces or locations we use as our reference.

You see the world full of objects with different qualifiers because you associate yourself with a fixed entity. You think you are this body with a fixed boundary that is watching the rest of the world. When you cut yourself off from the rest of the objects around you, you label everything else based on this reference you have created. You say something is far or near based on the physical boundaries, with respect to the coordinates of your body. You have created a reference point. Whatever you do, what you think, is based on this reference point. You live in this space enclosed by your physical boundary called *ghaṭākāśa*.

You see, there are three spaces we can live in: The space that is covered by the body, the space that is covered by the mind, and the space that cannot be covered by body and mind. The first is *ghaṭākāśa*, or the space enclosed by this physical body. This space exists inside our physical body. Most of us live in this space nearly all the time. The next is *cidākāśa*, the space that you are aware and conscious of. Right now, if you are aware of this hall it is your *cidākāśa*. This is the space of the thoughts and mind. The third is *mahākāśa*. This is the whole space, cosmos, everything put together.

The *ghaṭākāśa* is made up of the five elements that are: earth, water, fire, air and ether. These elements become subtler as we move up, from earth, to water, to fire, to air, to ether. None of the first four reflect consciousness. Ether, the subtlest element, connects with consciousness. It reflects consciousness. And that is the reason why we are alive. The problem is, we think consciousness is bound by *ghaṭākāśa*. We think it is limited to this body.

That is why we make this body the reference when we view the outer world. We think this body is the 'I' that sees the rest of the world. You see, all science had this as its basic foundation: we are separate entities defined by physical boundaries. Enlightened masters who have moved beyond *ghaṭākāśa* into *mahākāśa* understand that all this division of space is due to our ignorance.

Please understand that space can never be divided. Yet we divide it into boundaries and associate terms: within, inside, outside, near, far, etc. because of our limited understanding. This is the cause for our suffering. First of all, we divide the space because of our ignorance. Second, we try to possess the space that we think is in our control. And third, we fear that the space might be taken from us. All fears, including the fear of death, happen because we constantly try to protect the space covered by our body and mind.

We must understand the basic truth that space cannot be divided. When we understand that we are *mahākāśa*, we transcend all boundaries. When the jump from *ghaṭākāśa* to *cidākāśa*, and from *cidākāśa* to *mahākāśa* happens, we realize that there is no such thing as inside, outside, near or far.

Whatever space we may be in, the possibility of achieving a higher space is available to every one of us. Man, as such, is only potentiality. He is not actuality. He is not what he is supposed to be. As of now we are in seed form and have not expressed our potential fully. We have not become trees yet. But that does not mean we cannot grow and become trees. When we transcend these relative boundaries we will understand through experience what Krishna says.

Krishna says that the supreme truth is inside and outside all living entities. It is moving and non-moving on account of being subtle. This is the space of *mahākāśa*, which includes the space of everything. This space is absolute. Everything is included in this space. When there is no 'two,' how can we compare? How can we say something is near or far when there is only one? The truth is absolute and one.

Although the supreme spirit appears to be divided as the cosmic and individual entities, it is never divided. It is to be known that this is the basis of generation,

maintenance and destruction of life. The same universal energy that has no name or form manifests itself in this world as various shapes, names and forms. What is integrated and one appears as many.

When we pour water into containers of different shapes and sizes, it takes on their shapes. Water in each of the jars appears to be different from the others. If we carefully examine their contents, all of them contain the same water. Similarly, the world of many forms and shapes, so many species of plants and animals, appears as though there is so much variety. Underlying them all is the same energy. The *prāṇa śakti*, life force, running in each of them is the same.

In the *Upaniṣads* there is the analogy of the waves and the ocean that I spoke of earlier. Each wave rises from the same mass of water and falls back into it. In this brief period of time, from the time it rises until the time it falls, it thinks that it is different from the rest of the ocean. Similarly, each wave thinks it is independent and disconnected. The baby wave that is just born is given a name by the other waves, which are already present. Not only that, after a while this wave starts to define for itself an identity: 'This is my father wave,' 'This my mother wave,' 'These are my friends,' 'These are my teachers,' 'These are my enemies,' and so on.

After a while, the wave forgets that it has risen from the ocean. It gets busy in carving this false identity for itself. And before it realizes, it falls back into the ocean! Whether the wave likes it or not, whether it wants to believe it or not, it must fall back into the ocean because that is where it came from. It has no choice. It came from the ocean and it must go back into the ocean. All problems arise when the wave thinks it is different from the ocean and resists it. Different waves start to compare themselves with each other about which one is better, and even fight wars with each other.

If the wave understands that once it falls back it will emerge elsewhere as another wave, then there is no need to resist the fall. It will relax and enjoy. The wave will suddenly start to enjoy its play in the ocean. If the wave understands that other waves present in that vast mighty ocean are the same water, the wave will suddenly feel a deep connection with other waves because it knows that at the core, they are all one.

If we understand this simple theory of life - that we came from the same Source and we return to it - we will realize that we are connected to something much greater than our individual self.

A small story:

Once a boy saw a truck being hauled by another truck with the help of a rope. Both the trucks were moving slowly and causing a traffic jam. The boy saw this and started laughing loudly. The truck driver didn't understand what was happening and asked the boy why he laughed. The boy replied, 'You are using two trucks to carry a rope. That is why I am laughing.'

This is how our life is now. When we are in ignorance, we are fooled by everything in the world and we miss what it really is. The blind men fought with each other because they did not understand that the different things they perceived belonged to the same elephant. If we don't catch the thread that connects the entire universe, we miss the beauty and the bliss. It's only when we realize that each of us is a manifestation of the same divine energy that we feel a deep connection with everything and everyone.

The universal consciousness manifests in numerous ways and is also responsible for destruction. When the same universal energy is unmanifest, unexpressed, it exists in potential form. This is referred to as *puruṣa* in the scriptures. When this energy manifests itself in this world, taking various names, forms, and shapes, it expresses itself as *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is the creative expression of *puruṣa*.

Puruṣa, or the unmanifest energy, is beyond Brahma - the Creator, Vishnu - the Maintainer, and Shiva - the Rejuvenator. The universal consciousness that runs in all beings is beyond names and forms. However, this same universal consciousness in manifestation becomes Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. The creation, maintenance and destruction happen when this very same energy manifests as *prakṛti*.

The life force that caused us to be born also maintains us. Every little thing happening within us is carried out by the same intelligence that brought us into this world. Similarly, the same intelligence accompanies us when we leave the body.

The water of the ocean is the *puruṣa* and the waves that dance and play are *prakṛti*. The water appears to be divided in the form of waves of many shapes and sizes. In reality it is one mass of the same water. Similarly, Krishna reminds Arjuna that the supreme spirit appears to be divided into *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* because of the different creations and expressions of *prakṛti*. However, He is beyond all this and exists undivided. At their core, all are creations of the universal energy.

Krishna says that He is the supreme Self, or witnessing consciousness that is the source of all light in all luminous objects.

There is a beautiful verse in the Kathopanishad:

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra tārakam
nemā vidyato bhānti kuto yamāgni ।
tameva bhāntamanu bhāti sarvaṁ
tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti ॥*

This means: The sun, moon, and stars cannot illumine that self-illuminating consciousness, what to say of fire? But by following that self-illuminating consciousness, sun, moon, and others become bright. From the brightness of the body of the supreme Lord, the whole universe becomes bright.

The sources of light as we understand them are the sun, moon, lightning, fire or artificial means like electricity. All these produce light, which makes life possible. An object that is around us becomes visible because of the light energy. The *cakṣu*, the energy behind vision, can perceive that object when the surroundings are lit up. The light energy from the sun is responsible for the birth and growth of all living beings. All beings on planet Earth depend on the sun for their survival.

What gives these sources of light the energy to run? What drives them? The universal consciousness gives energy to all sources of light. Krishna calls this Self the 'Source of light'. The sources of light - the sun, the moon and lightning derive their energy from that self-luminous Self. That is why there is a common adjective given to the Self as 'effulgent' or 'luminous'.

In a deeper sense, when the Self is referred to as luminous, it is not what we normally understand. The Self is pure intelligence and this knowledge dispels ignorance. An enlightened master sees everything with clarity. He sees truth as it is. You see, when you are in a dark room you are ignorant of what is present in that room. When the lights are switched on, you become aware of things around you.

An enlightened master uses the lamp of consciousness to see the truth as it is, without any filters. Using this lamp, he experiences his surroundings in totality. This lamp is not like any other lamp; it cuts the layers of ignorance, however deep they may be. That is why the master sees 360 degrees around him. He does not filter what he sees like we do. Please understand, the filtering that we do is the cause of our problems. We do not see whatever exists *as* it exists. We distort it to suit our ideas that are born out of our engraved memories.

Our ego, which is loaded with emotions and memories, does not allow us to see and experience reality as it is. It is just like what happens when your computer is

overloaded with high-resolution images. What happens? It can't process whatever information is passed to it. Similarly, we use a filter of past emotions, ideas and memories to see the world. As a result we stop seeing things as they are. When we operate from our ego, we live in a fantasy world of our own without knowing what truly exists.

The ego is like darkness; it has no positive existence. Just as darkness is the absence of light, the ego is the absence of awareness. To struggle to kill the ego is like struggling to push darkness out of the room.

So how do we see things as they are and experience the truth? To expel the darkness, what you need to do is to forget about dealing with the darkness. Focus your energy on light instead. Bring a small lamp into the room and the darkness will leave on its own! This lamp of consciousness and awareness is available to all of us. It lies within us.

Forget all about the ego. Instead, focus on bringing a lamp of awareness into your being. When your entire consciousness has become a flame, the ego is no more.

*Q: Swamiji, I am confused by what I have read about **puruṣa** and **prakṛti**. You said **puruṣa** is the water of the ocean and **prakṛti** is the waves. It is so simple. Why are other explanations so complicated?*

All truths are simple. We complicate them because we do not understand the truths ourselves. We are full of self-doubts so we wish to cover all possibilities of it. We want the reader and the listener confused so that they do not ask more questions. The objective of all philosophers is to confuse others so that they cannot make out how confused they themselves are!

Don't get tied up in knots trying to understand these words. There is no need. Scholars and philosophers can worry about them. What you need to know is that there is one energy source. It is the same source that runs this universe and each of us. The absence of this awareness causes our problems and suffering.

This energy source is what Krishna calls *Paramātmān*, which when loosely translated means 'the supreme spirit'. This is Krishna consciousness, God, or whatever else you wish to call it. It pervades everything and everyone, and

without this energy nothing can work. This energy is intelligent. It is *buddhi* and *śakti*, intelligence and power, or powerful intelligence.

The *Sāṅkhya* philosophers, such as Kapila, dissected this concept further. They termed *puruṣa* as the unmoving part of this intelligent energy. This is the base, the foundation, the unseen, unmanifest energy. As an analogy, this is the ether of the space, the water of the ocean and the soil of the earth. *Prakṛti* is the manifestation of this potential energy. *Puruṣa* is pure energy; *prakṛti* is its manifestation as matter, so to speak. *Prakṛti* represents the waves in the ocean and the plants in the soil.

Understanding that it is all the same undifferentiated *puruṣa* is Self-realization, nothing else. Enlightenment is directly experiencing that you are one with that intelligent energy, the *Paramātmān*. That is why there is no need to achieve enlightenment. You only need to be aware that you *are* that. You need to understand that you are not the separated wave, different from the waters of the ocean. You *are* the ocean. You are the wave *and* the ocean.

This is all there is to it. Let the philosophers worry about all the attributes of *prakṛti* and so on. You relax!



Understanding The Energy

13.19 Thus the field of activities, knowledge and the knowable has been summarily described by Me.

It is only when we can understand the true nature of our supreme Self and the material world with which we have created false identities that we can go beyond this and attain the supreme Self itself.

*13.20 **Prakṛti** or the field and its attributes and **puruṣa** or the knower or the supreme consciousness are both without beginning.*

All the transformations of nature that we see are produced by the field or prakṛti.

*13.21 In the production of the body and the senses, **prakṛti** is said to be the cause;*

*In the experience of pleasure and pain, **puruṣa** is said to be the cause.*

13.22 The living entity in the material nature follows the way of life, enjoying the moods of nature.

Due to association with the material nature, it meets the good or evil among various species.

13.23 Yet, in this body there is a transcendental energy.

*He who is divine, who exists as an owner or the witness, supporter, enjoyer and the pure witnessing consciousness, is known as the **Paramātmān**.*

13.24 One who understands this philosophy concerning material nature, the living entity and the interaction of the modes of nature is sure to attain liberation.

He will not take birth here again, regardless of his present position.

Krishna delivers this discourse of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna standing in a chariot on the battlefield of *kurukṣetra*. If you look a little deeper, this is a beautiful picture of each of us. Krishna represents the Self, the charioteer, knower of the field, the one who runs the show. If the charioteer does not know how to take charge, the horses start to pull the chariot in different directions.

These horses symbolize the senses and the mind pulling us to different places as they please, thus leaving us in a state of confusion in everything that we do. If we are not ready to control the horses, the horses will control us. This is what happens in our lives. Due to our lack of understanding about how to drive the chariot, we conveniently give the horses the authority.

The very understanding about the *kṣetra*, meaning the material things around us, teaches us how to control them. The minute we understand the *kṣetra*, the body-mind, we realize we are not the *kṣetra*! If we are the *kṣetra*, then how can we understand it? You see, we can read this book because we are not the book. There is a separation between the book and us. In the same way, only when we understand the *kṣetra*, do we understand that we are not the *kṣetra*. This understanding that we are not the *kṣetra* brings with it the understanding that we are the *kṣetrajñya*. When we realize that we are the *kṣetrajñya*, we have transcended the *kṣetra*.

How do we understand the *kṣetra*? It is important to gain knowledge about our material world. Until then, we are in ignorance. When we are in ignorance, our senses and societal conditioning drive us. We end up believing that we are the material world or the *kṣetra* itself. We become so engrossed in the material world that we identify with it completely. We become part of it. We attach seriousness to every event that happens in the *kṣetra* because we have forgotten that we are the *kṣetrajñya* - the one watching the *kṣetra*.

Actually, there is no such thing as *kṣetra*. It is a projection of the mind, just like a dream. You see, when we go to bed we know that we are so-and-so, husband or wife of so-and-so, working in such-and-such company, etc. We know our whole identity with solid clarity when we go to sleep. We know that even if we have dreams, they are not real. We will wake up the next day and continue our life at the office, with our children and so on.

But the minute we drift into the dream state, we start to think that the dream is real. The more we get into the dream, the more our identity completely changes to suit the role in the dream. What happens in the dream may not be related to what we do in real life. Yet we start to believe it all. If a lion in the dream attacks us, we feel fear and worry and we may even sweat as though it is really happening to us!

In the same way, we think this life is real. If I tell you now that the life that you are leading is nothing but a creation of your mind, will you believe me? No! You are so immersed in this dream that you think is real.

See, when we wake up from a dream, why do we suddenly understand that it was not real? It is because suddenly we perceive a separation between the dream and us. The understanding that it was merely a dream, puts us into reality. Similarly, the understanding that this world is nothing but a projection of the mind, the understanding that this is not our real identity, will put us into reality.

A small story:

A Zen master woke up crying one morning. His disciples rushed to him. They enquired, 'What happened, master?' The master said, 'In my dream last night, I was a butterfly.'

The disciples did not understand. They asked, 'So what, master? It was a dream and it is over. What bothers you?'

The master replied, 'You do not understand my problem. I am unable to tell whether I am a Zen master who dreamed that I was a butterfly, or whether I am actually a butterfly who is dreaming that I am a Zen master.'

When we are dreaming, we are unaware of who we are because the dream is so real when it happens. For that reason, what makes us assume that the so-called real world that we are living in is real? It could well be another dream. When we dream we create the whole world inside, don't we? The whole setting is created by our mind. We are not creating just our identity, but we create everything that surrounds us also.

Let us say we dream of winning some award in front of thousands of people. The mind is so powerful that it can create the entire picture including every detail of the auditorium, all the thousand people sitting and clapping, the speeches, everything that we would normally see in an auditorium. The mind is so powerful to be able to give life to the scene around us and not just to our identity in the dream.

This is what the mind does in the so-called real world also. The only difference is that we wake up easily from our night dreams. However, we do not know how to wake up from this bigger day dream that we now think is reality. As long as we think this world is real, we suffer. The minute we realize this world is not real, we create a distance between the suffering and us. Only an enlightened master who has experienced the truth can awaken us to reality. Out of their compassion,

these masters descend on planet Earth to tell us that everything we see around us is a projection of our minds.

The understanding of the *kṣetra*, the illusory world created by our minds, is important in helping us to differentiate between reality and non-reality. Krishna says that we need to understand what *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya* are in order to realize the truth. Until then we blindly believe that the projection of our mind, the drama, is reality. We have created our own drama and are acting in it. By and by, we forget that we created the drama. We forget that we are not the roles or characters we enact onstage. We start judging and reacting to everything about it.

We are so engrossed in the material world that we have no awareness of our true self. This is also due to our upbringing. Parents and teachers don't tell us that we are divine beings having a human experience and that everything around us is a drama. The environment where we are brought up, our families and societal setup, do not encourage us in pursuing the path of Self-realization. This is because they are also caught in the false identities. They do not tell us that we are the *kṣetrajñya* because they do not know that themselves.

If a child is constantly reminded about the divinity within right from birth, it grows up to be a *jīvan mukta*, liberated while still in the body. This is how children were brought up in the *vedic* tradition. That is why the level of consciousness was so high.

Prakṛti, the material world that we see, is without beginning. *Puruṣa* or supreme consciousness is also without beginning. All changes and transformations are produced by *prakṛti*.

In a movie theatre, different movies are projected on the same white screen. The screen remains unaffected by the happenings in the movies that are played on it. It remains white and blank before and after the movie. In one scene, there may be happiness, with everyone celebrating. In the next, there may be sadness. Yet the screen is always the same, totally unclutched from the joys and sorrows of the movie. It remains completely unaffected by the different moods that are projected. In the same way, deep down, our core is completely unclutched. This is the *puruṣa* that Krishna refers to here. All changing, transient things around us are the play of *prakṛti*.

All the transformations that we see, such as the change in seasons, concepts of time and space, our body, mind or anything that changes are different attributes of *prakṛti*. It is like the ebb and flow of the waves in an ocean. These attributes rise and fall. The time and space of the rise and fall is totally relative. The duration of

the rise and fall of these attributes is also highly relative because it is purely a concept created by our senses. Our senses perceive time as moving. Our senses perceive the motion of time with respect to the material world, with relation to the speed of the planets, etc. We have created this concept of time for our sensory perceptions. We have created the space and location also with the concept of comparative reality.

The more we attach ourselves to the outer world and the play of *prakṛti* with respect to events, emotions, ego, body and mind, the more we get entangled in the world of time and space.

Albert Einstein said, 'Time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live.' This illustrates that modern science is proving and agreeing with what the mystics and *ṛṣis* have said for thousands of years. Time and space are relative concepts created in our mind. The movement of time and the movement of the mind are directly related to each other.

For example, if we are sitting with someone we love, no matter how much time passes, we feel as if we were with that person for a short duration. We will not be aware how time passed so quickly. On the other hand, if we are sitting with a person who bores us or bothers us, we will feel like looking at our watch constantly. We would feel that time is not moving at all.

As long as our mind moves, time moves. When we look deeply, we realize that the mind is a constant movement between past and future. The mind is a dilemma; it is constantly reviewing the past and planning for the future. We are constantly pulled towards the past or future and are never in the present moment.

We can try a small experiment. For three days decide to completely stay in the present moment without bothering about the past or future. Surely, if we live in the present for three days, we will not lose all our belongings and attachments. So let's decide to stay in the present moment for three days. We can simply fall into the present moment. When we fall into the present moment, the time shaft becomes a servant to us. We can penetrate the time shaft. This means we will have complete access to the entire past and the entire future. Deciding to stay in the present moment for three days means that we must accept whatever we have in the outer and inner worlds.

Whether it is the outer world or the inner world, any craving is a craving. Any craving means that we are being pulled into the future. A craving for enlightenment is also a craving and a hope for the future. The moment we drop all cravings and

all reviews about the past, we fall into the present moment and penetrate the time shaft. Falling into the present moment is called falling into the gap. This is the gap between two thoughts, the *kṣaṇa*.

When we fall into the present moment, we fall into eternity and that eternity is a combination of past, present and future. There is no distinction. In this state we become the witness of all time and space-related happenings. We become the witnessing consciousness. We become the knower and we witness the field or *kṣetra* with complete detachment. We realize that everything in the outer world is a drama or a dream, and anything that we attempt to do in our lives is housekeeping in this dream.

Any effort that we make is another act in this dream. The whole idea is to not become entangled or emotionally attached to the housekeeping in this dream. The idea is to enjoy it and watch it by becoming one with our true self.

Knowledge about the material world is necessary to help us step back from the dream and realize that we are unnecessarily attached and entangled in the field, *kṣetra*. All transformations in the field are related to time and space, which are in turn related to our mind. When we penetrate the time shaft, time becomes our servant. We also see that the whole time shaft is our projection. When we penetrate the time shaft and become witnessing consciousness, we completely control our past and future. The past and the future are transformations of the material world. All transformations are the play of *prakṛti* or the field. Mind is a part of *prakṛti*.

Becoming the watcher and having complete awareness to become the watcher of *prakṛti* means dropping preconceived notions, ideas, concepts, ego, attachments of the mind and the mind itself. We become the watcher when we are completely aware of what is happening inside us whenever we perceive information through our senses. We watch the process of how it happens. The moment we put our attention on it, the mind ceases. The moment we decide to put our attention on it, we have decided to become the watcher. It then depends on how long we can remain the watcher without becoming entangled in what is being watched. The more we practice this, the longer we experience being the watcher. We realize that we are *puruṣa*.

‘Nature is the source of all material causes and their effects, whereas the living entity is the source of things such as *sukha* (pleasure), *duḥkha* (pain) and everything that is of the world.’

Krishna puts us back into our consciousness through these words. This contains the gist of what He has been saying in the previous verses. He makes a clear statement that whatever we see is not us.

He says, 'Go beyond and beyond and beyond and beyond. When you are able to see the body, move beyond. If you are able to witness your thoughts, go further beyond. If you are able to see your moods, go further beyond. If you are able to witness your emotions, go further beyond. You are not that either.'

At one point we cannot go further. We will realize that there's nothing beyond. We are not what we witness. Suddenly, at that moment, pure consciousness starts happening in us.

Ramana Maharshi, an enlightened master who lived in Tiruvannamalai, says beautifully, 'Whatever can be dropped, drop it. At some point we will not be able to drop anything. There will be nothing to drop. Then hold that, that's all.'

Witness the consciousness that is witnessing. When you watch, detach from the thoughts, sit back, relax and watch. Do not try to create, nourish or destroy the thoughts. The ultimate consciousness that witnesses is beyond Brahma (Creator), Vishnu (Sustainer) or Shiva (Rejuvenator). When we learn to welcome thoughts, they merely come and go.

It is like watching clouds in the sky. The next time you sit by a window with clouds passing by, try this exercise. Watch the clouds without giving qualifiers to them. Normally, when we watch clouds, we think, 'Oh, that cloud looks like an animal, that cloud resembles a face, the color of that cloud reminds me of those mountains,' and so on. If we can watch them without giving them any attributes, in a completely detached manner, only one thought remains in the end: the thought that you are watching clouds. Even this thought should dissolve for you to be a complete witness.

Even if there is a thought saying that you are witnessing, watch that thought also. Watch the witnessing until that thought also disappears. Go beyond and beyond, deep into your being. Go beyond the thought that you are witnessing. Please be very clear that as long as you think in your mind that you are witnessing, you are not witnessing. When the thought that you are witnessing exists, you are not witnessing. You are now caught in the thought, 'I am witnessing.' Drop that!

This last thought that you are witnessing is like a bridge between you and God, between you and the thoughtless zone. Initially, when you try to witness your actions and your thoughts, it is natural to think that you are watching. Let it be. Having this thought is better than having a hundred thoughts bombarding your inner space.

But go beyond. Do not stop there. Witness the thought that you are witnessing. Then the pure, uncorrupted and untouched inner space happens in you. It is only in the uncorrupted and pure inner space that God manifests and the divine consciousness is perceived.

This is the secret or true meaning of the story of Virgin Mary giving birth to Jesus. Understand, when we make our inner space pure like a virgin, we give birth to Christ or the Christ consciousness! We become divine.

Normally, the space in which thoughts happen in us is filled with conditionings and past memories, what we call engraved memories or engrams. If the Divine is like 24-carat gold in our inner space, copper is added to the pure 24-carat gold in the form of all the conditioning, making it 18-carat or less. Sometimes there is so much conditioning that what comes out is only pure copper! If we flood this space with awareness, if we flood this space with consciousness, it gets cleansed. When we cleanse our inner space, we allow 24-carat gold to happen again within.

Then, whatever we think, speak or do is directly in alignment with the will of the universal consciousness. Then we fall in tune with the Divine. We become a hollow bamboo and allow the Divine to flow through us.

Here Krishna gives us a technique. As of now, we are like 18-carat gold, copper and gold mixed together. When we repeatedly put the 18-carat gold into the fire of witnessing consciousness, eventually it becomes 22-carat gold. If we continue to put that gold into the fire, the 22-carat gold becomes pure 24-carat gold. In the same way, if we put ourselves into the fire of witnessing consciousness, we become purified to a certain extent. Again and again, if we constantly put ourselves into this fire of witnessing consciousness, our inner space eventually becomes completely pure, like 24-carat gold.

Let me narrate to you a real incident that happened when I was in the Himalayas:

I met an elderly *Naga sadhu*, a person belonging to a sect of wandering monks who wear no clothes and have no possessions. He was sitting on the banks of the sacred river Ganga in the forest. He was calm and serene, so I felt I should go and spend some time just staying around him. He had a pipe with which he smoked ganja.

He said, '*Baithiye, baithiye,*' ('sit, sit' in Hindi). Before smoking the pipe, he put a few copper coins inside it. Then he added the ganja, lit it and started smoking. After smoking, he emptied the pipe. Gold coins fell out of the pipe!

I couldn't believe my eyes. He sold the gold coins and purchased more ganja. Then, again he showed me that ordinary copper coins were being turned into pure gold coins. I stayed with him for one or two days. I saw him do this more than ten times.

The turning of the copper coins into gold is called alchemy i.e., changing base metals into higher metals. I asked him, 'Baba, how do you do this?' I had never told him that I was from South India and I was also speaking in broken Hindi, not in Tamil, my native language.

The *baba* suddenly replied in Tamil, '*Angam pazzhuthaal, thangam pazzhukkum.*' It means, 'If your being ripens, gold can be made to appear.' I was shocked to hear him reply in Tamil!

His words mean that when we fill our inner space with witnessing consciousness, our lower energy gets transformed into spiritual energy. This inner alchemy makes the outer alchemy possible. Your inner space starts radiating by witnessing the witnessing consciousness.

The essence of all religions and all spirituality, the whole thing is contained in this single verse that Krishna presents here. Krishna presents the master key that opens all locks, in this chapter: witnessing the body and the mind, witnessing your being. Witnessing is the master key.

If we can enter the witnessing technique and experience the witnessing mode for at least a few minutes, we will get a taste of it. However much we hear about witnessing, however much we talk about witnessing or however much we analyze the art of witnessing, unless we experience it ourselves, it is of no use.

A small story:

A man was driving on a highway around midnight. A cop stopped and asked him, 'Sir, I think you are drunk. Have you been drinking?'

The man replied, 'Yes, I have just had six drinks. Do you want the names? A few cans of beer, a few brandies...' He started listing the drinks.

The cop said, 'Stop, I need to take a breath analyzer test. Please get out of the car.'

The man asked, 'Why do you need a test? Don't you believe me?'

The cop was required to do the test whether he believed the driver or not.

Similarly, you cannot just take my word for it. You must do the test. You must test it on yourself. You must test it with your being. Reading or listening will not transform you. Reading or listening is like reading the menu and leaving the restaurant without tasting the food on the menu! If you listen to what I say without testing, it is like going away from a restaurant without eating.

So now since we have read the menu card, it is time to taste the preparation.

Krishna goes one step further. All along He told us how to cleanse our inner space and how to realize the divine consciousness within. Now, in the last verse He says that one who does so attains liberation, regardless of his present position.

Every being is moving towards the Divine, whether or not the being is aware of it. We take on this body to fulfill certain desires. If we truly put our energies into dissolving these desires, we have no reason to take another birth to fulfill these desires. The problem happens when we start to lead somebody else's life and forget we are here to live our desires and not others' desires. We constantly borrow other people's desires and accumulate them in us.

Then, before we start realizing our true nature, it becomes time to leave this body. We take with us the entire baggage of unfulfilled desires and take another body again. The universe again and again tries to help us dissolve our desires so that we become free of them. But we resist by not accepting what happens within and around us.

Krishna says that an understanding of *kṣetra* or *prakṛti* straightaway liberates us. We are caught up in pursuing sense pleasures and accumulating desires as long as we associate ourselves with this body. The minute we understand that we are beyond the body and mind, we suddenly realize, 'What stupidity to run in this rat race!'

All our problems arise due to the ignorance of our true nature. The understanding that we are beyond all petty things like fighting for name, fame, money or power liberates us from them. A cognitive shift happens and frees us from the bondage of material things. When the understanding happens about the futility of acquiring material possessions and relationships, a sudden shift happens in the inner consciousness.

It can happen at any time, to anyone. It is not necessary that you be brought up in an ashram, listening to God's name all the time. You could be anywhere, doing anything. The cognitive shift can happen to anyone at any time. And when it happens, it is a quantum jump in the level of consciousness. It does not happen gradually. It is like pressing a switch and the whole room is lit up in one shot.

There are a number of saints in India in whom this cognitive shift has happened. Before enlightenment, the great South Indian saint Purandara Dasa used to be a goldsmith by profession. He was immersed day and night in counting how much he had earned. He was so miserly that he never bothered to share his wealth with the needy.

On the other hand, his wife was generous. She never hesitated to give anything that she had to someone who needed it more than her. However, she did so secretly because her husband objected.

One day she gave her diamond nose ring to someone who asked for money. Purandara Dasa somehow found out about this incident. He did not like the fact that such a precious ring had been given away. He went home angrily to express his disapproval to his wife.

In the meantime his wife, not knowing what to do, pleaded with God to help her. By the time Purandara Dasa arrived home, his wife had her ring intact. It was a play of the Divine.

Her husband could not understand what was going on. Suddenly, deep down, a shift happened within him. He realized how much he had wasted his energies going after money. It had brought him nowhere. He realized the futility of his life until then. And he set out on a deep quest for self-realization.

So, irrespective of our profession or the level at which we may be spiritually, just an understanding of the play of Existence is enough to heal us. Just an understanding that we are beyond material pursuits is enough to liberate us.

Q: Swamiji, are we talking about an intellectual understanding here? I understand that none of my material possessions are permanent. In any case, when I die I cannot take anything with me. But as long as I live in this body, I need sustenance and I need to work for material benefits. This work is reality, not an illusion. What is the answer?

You have provided the answer yourself. You are aware that you cannot carry anything with you when you die. You know that nothing you acquire is permanent. This is a good understanding.

All you must work on now is your intellect. Develop this understanding further. It will penetrate you sooner or later.

There are different ways to look at material acquisition. Most of us keep acquiring whether we need the material possessions or not. We do it because it seems to give us status and name and fame since society respects you based on what you have. There is no end to this. This is a competition, a rat race. Even if you win the rat race, you will still be a rat!

You do not enjoy what you work for because you are so caught up in acquiring more. There is always someone else who has more than you, so you cannot stop. You are a robot with the stop button removed!

Another way to look at it is with logic, as you are doing now. This is good. You do not acquire for the sake of acquiring but because you need it to survive. The problem however, is that each of us has our own definition for 'survival'. One person can walk to work; another person must drive; a third person must be driven!

You are still working towards a result and you are still attached to an outcome. If the outcome is in your favor, you are happy. If not, you are in misery. You are still in bondage.

There is a third way of looking at this. You have been brought into this world by an intelligent energy. You can trust that energy to take care of you. When you pray to God, you pray with an objective. You know that God can give; however, you do not believe that God knows what to give you. So, you make a petition that God can listen to. Why? When the Divine has the power to give, don't you think it has intelligence to know what to give?

I agree you need to work; no one can remain idle for long. However, you can work without becoming attached to the outcome of work. When you do this, you are in a witnessing mode. You work and yet, you are not attached to the outcome of the work. You know that whatever happens, it will be okay. You know deep within, that the intelligent energy will take care of you.



Many People, Many Paths

*13.25 Some perceive the **Paramātman** in their inner psyche through mind and intellect that have been purified by meditation*

*Or by metaphysical knowledge or by **karma yoga**.*

13.26 There are those who, although not conversant in spiritual knowledge, begin to worship the supreme personality upon hearing about Him from others.

Through the process of hearing about the Supreme Self, they also transcend the path of birth and death.

13.27 Bharata, know that whatever is born whether movable or immovable,

*It comes into existence by the combination of **kṣetra** and **kṣetrajñya**.*

In this verse, Krishna gives various techniques for the path to Self-realization. He says various methods or paths may be used to realize our true Self. People say 'As many masters, so many paths.' Actually it should be 'As many disciples, so many paths!' Each disciple can have his own path. This is what Krishna says. We can attain the ultimate consciousness through different paths.

Krishna says that through meditation or yoga or knowledge or contemplation or surrendering to the Divine, you can attain liberation. All the different methods lead to the same goal. Each chapter of the Bhagavad Gita gives a different technique to realize the Self. Krishna talks about *jñāna yoga*, union through knowledge, in Chapter 4. Then He talks about *bhakti yoga*, union through devotion, in Chapter 12.

Whatever be the path, the ultimate goal is the same. Ramakrishna proved this truth by practicing different religions and different techniques. If you read his biography, you will see that he practiced Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Tantra.

He concluded that all these paths lead to the same ultimate consciousness. He also preached different paths to different disciples. He asked Vivekananda to read books on *advaita*, non-duality. He asked other disciples to be immersed in devotion to Devi (Divine Mother). He suggested different paths depending on what kind of a person the disciple was. If someone was logical, if someone had lots of questions like Vivekananda did, he asked them to read books. If someone was devoted, he suggested the path of *bhakti* or devotion.

After our second-level meditation program, Nithyananda Spurana Program, I give spiritual names to those who ask for it. I give the names based on the energies of the devotees. The names depend on how they connect to the cosmic Nithyananda. If I see that individuals act at an emotional level like devotion, I give names that suit that particular energy. The second category is intellectual people. Intellectual people are those who connect at a mental level. They need logical explanations for everything. The third category is of those who connect at the being level.

When I ask for their names, I meditate on their energies and give them the spiritual names. The spiritual name gives them a path, and the path is different for each one. The name has significance. The name reminds you of your path. We generally associate ourselves with our name. So whenever you utter your name or when somebody calls you by your spiritual name, it rings a bell in your head. It guides you to the destination.

Krishna tells Arjuna about the paths. He gives options. Krishna gives alternatives: meditation, yoga, chanting *mantra*, learning and acquiring knowledge and surrendering to the cosmos.

One important thing is that you should know which path is good for you. Lots of people take up a spiritual path without knowing what it is. You should understand what your path is. Many people attend meditation courses in the ashram. They enjoy those few days in the ashram being around me and they decide to join the ashram. They don't know what their path is or if ashram life is their path. They just want to join, that's all. They ask me, '*Swamiji*, I want to join the ashram. Please tell me what I should do.'

There are other people who simply follow what others are doing. If the parents are followers of a particular guru, the children also follow that guru. There is nothing wrong in following someone for a start. You can have a starting point but you should find out if you are on the right path. You should not blindly follow someone because someone you know is following that guru.

A small story:

On a dark night, a man discovered that the headlights of his car had failed. He decided to follow the car in front of him. It was dark outside and he could not see anything. If the car in front took a turn, he also took that turn. He managed quite well using the light from the car ahead of him.

After some time, the lights of the lead car switched off and came to a sudden halt. The second driver bumped into the car and shouted at the driver of the first car, 'Why did you stop?'

'I've reached my house. What do you expect me to do?' replied the other driver.

You see, if you follow something or someone blindly, you will not reach the correct destination. You must know your own path.

There are lots of people who go to meditation programs offered by one guru. Then they go to another guru and attend all his courses as well. They keep hopping. Like island hopping, they do guru hopping. Actually nowadays this has become a fashion. People ask each other, 'How many courses have you attended?' You start collecting certificates from all the gurus.

There are different paths to realize the truth. However, we must understand what our path is. This is where a true enlightened master can help. He knows exactly what the path is for you. He corrects you when you are on the wrong path. He corrects your mistakes and your techniques according to what your path is. In our Advanced Healers Program, disciples sit on the stage and answer the audience's questions. When they answer the questions, I know what mistakes they are making and I correct them.

In this verse Krishna gives different techniques, like meditation, yoga, knowledge. Lots of people do these things. Some people ask, 'Swamiji, I am meditating daily for 21 minutes. I am still unable to feel anything. Why is it?' I ask them, 'Tell me honestly, are you meditating with full intensity and full awareness? When you are meditating, is your mind with your body or are you thinking about the office?' Naturally, they do not say anything after that.

You see, all the techniques must be done in the correct manner. If you fall asleep while meditating, even if you sit for 21 minutes for 21 days, there will be no proper result. Let me tell you something that happened in one of our meditation classes. This meditation technique is meant for the *anāhata cakra* - the energy center

located in the heart region. At the end of this meditation, we keep our focus on the *anāhata* or heart. One person sat straight and started the meditation very well. Then towards the end, he started feeling sleepy and started dropping to one side. During the last 10 minutes, I called to him and asked, 'What are you doing?' He said, 'I am doing *anāhata* meditation, *Swamiji*.'

I asked him, 'Are you doing the meditation on *your anāhata* or on your *neighbor's anāhata*?'

You see, meditation must be done with awareness. Everything you do can be meditation if you do it with awareness and intensity. Lots of people chant *mantras*. Daily they wake up early, take a bath and sit in the prayer room and chant. If they chant with awareness it is fine. But what do they often do?

If the milkman calls from outside the house at that time, they shout back, 'Okay, put the milk near the door. I will take it later.' Then they resume chanting! Next, the maid comes and starts gossiping about the neighbors. Immediately, though they continue to chant, they will be hearing the gossip! Sometimes they will even give their expert opinions on whatever they are hearing!

This is not meditation. In the same way, there are lots of misconceptions about yoga. People go to yoga classes for exercises. Today yoga has become a fashion. There are so many types of yoga: Power yoga, Deluxe yoga and Super-deluxe yoga. A yoga studio is like a fashion-shopping complex. If someone says, 'I am doing yoga,' it is like saying, 'I have a Mercedes car.' That is what yoga has become now. Yoga was meant to be much more than a body and status building exercise. Krishna gives it as a path to attain the ultimate consciousness.

In this verse Krishna talks about *sāṅkhyena*, through knowledge or philosophical discussion. You should understand one thing. Gathering knowledge and philosophical discussions can be done in two ways. Many people read lots of books. They have a big library with philosophical books, religious books, spiritual books and biographies of masters. They collect books and knowledge. When someone says something, they quote from the books and have long discussions.

These people are the intellectuals. They collect knowledge like others collect stamps or coins. But if you look deeper, the knowledge will be just another manifestation of their ego. They would just show off their superiority in front of others. They would not have really assimilated the knowledge. They would have have not really internalized it for themselves.

Krishna says you can attain the goal using knowledge. We must understand that reading and collecting knowledge alone is not enough. We must experience in

order to know. As long as we are collecting different philosophies, we are basically only collecting. We are not adding value to ourselves. We must practice and internalize the great truths. When we internalize them, transformation happens in us. If we discuss for the sake of showing our knowledge and ego, we have made no use of that knowledge. Knowledge and discussions can be a powerful tool only if we know how to use them for our growth.

At the end of the verse, Krishna gives a wonderful technique. He gives the ultimate technique, the technique of surrendering. He says, 'Surrender the outcome of your actions to Me.' This is the most effective technique. He talks about it throughout the Gita.

Just surrender the fruits of your actions to Him, the universal consciousness. Most often, we take responsibility for our actions. That is when our tensions and problems start. Just surrender everything to the cosmic energy of Krishna. Once we do, we will feel liberated. We will feel free. This is the easiest path to reach the truth.

Are there any prerequisites to attain the truth or to start on a spiritual path? Krishna tries to answer this question. So many people attend one meditation course and think they have become enlightened. They can feel happy about doing something like meditation, but the problem is they start preaching to others without really experiencing it themselves. They start looking down upon or even intimidating others who do not meditate. Krishna answers this question. A person need not have any spiritual knowledge to start on a particular path. There is no prerequisite. Even if the person is totally new to spirituality, he can follow a spiritual path.

Only a cognitive shift must happen. It is like this. A man who is blind from birth does not know what light is. He does not know what colors are. He has never seen them. He does not have any prior experience of light. If he is left to himself where there is no one else living, he will think darkness is all that there is in the world. If somehow the sight energy or *cakṣu* is activated in him, he sees everything in front of him. He enjoys light and colors. He did not know what they were before he got his eyesight, yet immediately, he can enjoy them.

That shift must happen. That's all. So many enlightened masters did not have any prior knowledge about spirituality. Let me tell you about the enlightened master Valmiki from India who wrote the great epic Ramayana.

Before enlightenment, he was a highway robber. He waited by the roads in the jungles. Whenever wealthy people crossed that jungle, he robbed them.

One day the sage Narada was passing through that jungle. Narada is known for his devotion to Vishnu, one of the Hindu trinity. All Narada had was a small stringed instrument that he played while constantly singing the praises of Vishnu. When Valmiki saw him, he stopped him and said, 'Give me everything you have, otherwise I will kill you!' Narada told him, 'I don't have anything with me except this small instrument and God's name. So I can't give you anything.' Valmiki thought he was bluffing. He asked Narada, 'How can you not have anything?'

Narada smiled and asked, 'What do you do with all these things that you rob from others?' Valmiki told him, 'These are for my family, my children, my wife and my parents.'

Narada asked, 'You do all this for your children, wife and parents. Do you think they will stay with you forever?'

Valmiki told Narada, 'Yes, of course, they will be with me. I get them wealth. I provide them with food to survive. They will always be with me.'

Narada once again asked him, 'Are you sure they will always be there for you?'

Valmiki became irritated. He replied, 'Can't you understand? I am sure that they will always be there for me.'

Actually Narada was only buying time asking him such questions. He kept Valmiki engaged in a conversation and made him look at life from a different perspective.

Finally Narada asked, 'Okay, you have lots of trust that your family will always support you; they will always be there for you. Will they be there when you die? If you ask them to die with you, will they agree?'

Valmiki confidently answered, 'I am sure at least one of them will come if I ask them. I am robbing people only to support them. They are surviving because I get them this wealth. I am sure if I ask, they will die with me.'

Narada said, 'Okay, if you think they will do that for you, go and ask them and come back to me. If any one of them agrees, you can kill me. I will not go anywhere. I will stay here.'

Valmiki agreed and went home. He asked his wife first if she would die with him. His wife said, 'Dear, it is true that I am your other half, but I don't

think it is fair to ask me to die with you. When it comes to your death, it is your death only.'

Valmiki was shocked. Anyway, he thought his children would surely go with him, as they loved him very much. He asked his children, and they said, 'Father, we are young. We haven't seen the world yet. You have seen everything but we haven't. How can we die with you?'

Valmiki became depressed. His wife and children were saying they wouldn't be there with him when he died. He then thought his parents would surely go with him as they had taken care of him and had raised him. So he went up to them and asked them the same question. But to his surprise, they said, 'Why should we die with you? We are enjoying our life with our grandchildren. Why should we die with you?'

This shocked him. He went back to Narada and told him what had happened. Narada listened and told him, 'The only person who can be with you always is God.'

This statement changed the whole life of Valmiki. He realized the futility of what he was doing. He sat in the forest and meditated so deeply and for so long that an anthill formed on top of him. That is how he got his name Valmiki, which means 'born from an anthill'. When he came out of meditation, he was enlightened!

Valmiki did not have any knowledge about spirituality. He was a robber. That one statement by Narada made all the difference. He started looking inward after that, and became enlightened.

One important thing to note is that just because someone has spiritual knowledge, it does not mean that he is actually a seeker. I have seen people read lots of books and discuss spirituality even when it is not needed. They think they have great spiritual knowledge. They think they are superior.

Actually, all they have is intellectual knowledge, not spiritual knowledge. When they speak, they do not speak out of experience. That is the difference between an enlightened master and a normal person. When an enlightened master speaks about spirituality, he speaks from his experience of the truth. He has experienced the truth. When a normal person speaks, it is his ego that is speaking. His so-called spiritual knowledge comes from the intellect, from the ego.

People ask me, '*Swamiji*, do you think I should attend this course? Do you think I am capable of doing this course?' I tell them, 'If you are stable and available, I

shall make you able.’ That is the only prerequisite. If you are stable and available, you are capable of attaining the ultimate truth.

There are two requirements: be stable and be available. You must be stable first. If you are restless, if your mind continuously jumps here and there like a monkey, you will not be able to focus on the path. You will not be able to spend time with yourself. That is the first thing you must have, stability. Next you must be available. This does not mean simply being physically present. You should be present in mind, body and being. You should be available to learn. You should be open.

Many people think they know everything about spirituality. When they attend my courses, they ask scores of questions. I immediately know why they ask so many questions. Their cup is already full. There is no space for anything new to enter. They are not available. Simple! Actually, the best thing that can happen to anyone is to not know anything about spirituality. Then when they hear something, they immediately catch it. That is really the best thing because then, no unlearning needs to be done.

That is what Krishna says. You do not need prior knowledge about spirituality to embark on a path. Even if someone simply tells you about it and you start following a path, it is enough. But be very clear, you should know what you are doing. Don’t do anything blindly. In the previous verse, we have talked about it. We should understand what our path is. That’s all.

Whatever you see is a combination of matter and energy. The whole universe is seen as *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya*, *māyā* and *ātman*, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, matter and energy, body-mind and consciousness. Existence as we see it cannot be with only one of them. If we believe that what we see is simply matter, we are in illusion or *māyā*.

Kṣetra is the body that we associate ourselves with and *kṣetrajñya* is the consciousness. What we see as a human body is a combination of both. If there is no consciousness, the body is useless. The matter that we call a body comes to life because of consciousness. Both must be there.

Prakṛti is the manifest and *puruṣa* is the unmanifest. *Kṣetra* is like *prakṛti*. It is the manifested, that which we can see. Along with what you see, there is something behind its existence. It is *puruṣa* or the unmanifest, the energy behind the matter, which we do not normally see.

We have seen in the earlier verses that all the millions of stars, planets and other celestial bodies exist in perfect harmony. There are so many galaxies. They are

moving in space that has no bounds. How are they moving in such order? Look at our solar system. All the planets move in perfect paths. If we think they are rocks, dust or ice, if we think they are simply matter, how is such an order maintained in the universe?

They are not solely matter. There is something behind the existence of that matter. There is so much chaos; yet there is a beautiful order in that chaos. Order is present because of *kṣetrajñya*. If it were solely matter or *kṣetra*, there would not be any intelligence. There is intelligence in that matter. That intelligence or consciousness creates this existence. So the combination of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya* is necessary.

Modern science has shown that matter and energy are the same. They are interchangeable. The outer-world scientists proved this recently. However, the inner-world scientists proved it thousands of years ago. Matter and energy coexist to create existence.

I mentioned earlier how every cell of our body has intelligence. Science has proven that every cell in our system has embedded intelligence. Each cell is not made up of simply some chemicals. Each cell also has intelligence or energy. This combination creates the body-mind system.

We should understand that *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya* are not separate entities when we analyze them at a deeper level. *Kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya* are comprised of the same thing. *Kṣetra* is the gross form of the energy that also makes up the subtle form of the *kṣetrajñya*. For existence to happen, both the subtle and gross forms must be there.

How we look at things around us defines our lifestyle. We again and again look at things as only matter. When we see only this gross level, fear and greed creep into us. We then want to get more and more of this matter. We live a materialistic life when we think that all we see is solely matter. When we live at the *kṣetra* level, we live in an illusion or *māyā*. That is the problem. When we live in this illusion, we define ourselves based on all these things which we think of only as matter. Because of this, we run after matter and want to acquire more.

We want to possess the matter. We want to get more and more. But when we realize that it is energy also, we think, 'How can I possess energy? Is it possible to possess it?' No. We can't hold energy in a bag. When this realization happens, we recognize the futility of running after different things that we think are only matter.



We Are *Brahman*

13.28 One who sees the supreme spirit accompanying the individual soul in all bodies,

Who understands that neither the individual soul nor the supreme spirit is ever destroyed, he actually sees.

13.29 When one does not get degraded or influenced by the mind and when he can see the supreme spirit in all living and non-living things,

One reaches the transcendental destination.

13.30 One who can see that all activities are performed by the body, which is created of material nature,

Sees that the Self does nothing, he actually sees.

13.31 When a person can see the supreme Self in all living entities, then he will cease to see the separateness among the living entities.

He will see that the whole universe is an expansion and expression of the same truth.

Krishna says, 'Anyone who has reached Self-realization or the ultimate consciousness sees that the supreme Self is present in all living and non-living entities. He perceives the supreme Self as the indestructible, beginning-less witnessing consciousness.'

The Existence that we see is not comprised of individual entities. We think that we are separate from others around us. In reality, we are all one. The same supreme Self that Krishna speaks about is present in all of us and in everything we see around us.

As I tell everyone, 'I am not here to prove that I am God, I am here to prove that you are God.'

This is the truth. When I say this, people say, 'No, no, *Swamiji*. How can we be God? We have done many sins. We agree that you are God because you have healing powers. But how can we be God?'

Please understand one thing. It is not that you are not God because you have committed sins. Understand that you do not become a devil if you commit a sin. You are still God. Sins do not qualify or disqualify you from being a God. Your nature is Godliness. Sin is a concept developed by society to control people. The soul of a robber has the same qualification to reach the truth as that of a priest in a temple.

We create a barrier between God and us. We are not ready to believe that what we call God is inside us also. We happily accept someone else standing in front of us as God; however, we cannot accept that the same God is inside us.

Society would find it difficult to keep us under control if we were to call ourselves Gods!

Let me tell you an incident from my own life:

I left home at seventeen with nothing, nothing at all, and traveled northwards in India. As I had vowed to carry no money I traveled without a ticket on train. In the northern part of India, my saffron robe was a passport to free travel. No one bothered me.

However, once when I was traveling towards Kolkata, a ticket examiner asked for my ticket. In my broken Hindi mixed with the local language of Bengali, I asked him, 'What ticket? I am *Brahman* (universal energy). This train is *Brahman*. You are *Brahman*. Why ticket?'

He was a good man. Not only did he let me travel without a ticket, he also bought food for me!

Yes, we are all *Brahman*. God is everywhere. Divine energy fills and overflows in all places. The only problem is we do not see this. We only see one thing at a time. We see God as someone different and powerful. We create a big gap between God and us.

People in the West call Hindus 'idol worshippers'. They make fun of them. Actually there are people in India too who make fun of idol worship. All the so-called intellectuals and scientific people look down upon people who worship idols.

Some so-called *neo-vedantis* preach *Vedānta* but consider idol worship unscientific. The same is true about performing rituals like *homa* (fire rituals) or *abhiṣekha* (water rituals).

We should understand there is more than an idol in front of us when we worship. When we worship, we worship *through* the idol. We do not worship the idol itself. When we see the energy behind the idol and worship that energy, that worship has value. That is the science also. If we blindly worship the stone without feeling the energy behind the stone, there is no point in it.

Let me ask you, why do we feel a great sense of relief after we pray to God sincerely? Why do we feel a sense of satisfaction when we come out of the temple after prayers? Why do we feel light? When we see the energy behind the idol and worship that energy, we connect to that energy.

When I say we connect to that energy, we create a channel for the soul that is inside us to connect to the supreme Self. This brief time of connection relieves us from our burdens of responsibility. We see the supreme spirit in the idol and pour out our problems in the form of prayers.

We feel relieved because we have full faith in the supreme spirit. We have full confidence that the supreme spirit will take care of us. We believe in the supreme spirit but we do not believe that the soul that we see in us is also the supreme spirit! We are not able to internalize this truth.

Krishna says the soul that is in us and the soul that is in others is the supreme spirit and the supreme soul. But what do we do? We isolate our soul. We define a boundary for our soul and separate it from the supreme spirit. It is like this. There are ten pots of water and there is the reflection of the sun in all the ten pots. Each pot thinks that it holds the sun. All ten pots think that each one is holding a different sun.

In the same way, we think the soul inside us is different from the soul outside us. When we see the same soul everywhere in everything, when we break the pots, we see what the supreme Self is.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa says beautifully, 'What is there in the microcosm is there in the macrocosm.' The same energy inside the microcosm or the gross matter that we see is inside the macrocosm or the subtle matter that we can't comprehend. Krishna says that only when we see this energy in everything around us do we actually see.

Krishna says, 'When we see that the soul that resides in us and in everything around us is indestructible, we see the truth.' The only thing that lives forever is the soul. We should understand that. Everything else must die one day. When we realize this truth, when we understand that only the soul can remain forever, our whole race to get more and more becomes worthless. We realize, 'What is the use of running after things that we know are not going to be with us forever?'

When this is realized, we see the truth.

The mind is the only obstacle on the path to reach the ultimate goal. In the previous verse, Krishna tells us how we can see the truth. Here Krishna talks about the hurdle that we must cross. He says that when we are not degraded or influenced by the mind, we can see the supreme spirit in everything. Only when we can do that, can we reach the final destination.

The only thing that prevents us from seeing the truth is our mind. Even if I say that the soul that is inside each of us is the same soul, the supreme Self, our mind will not agree. It will influence us to disbelieve this. As long as the mind comes into the path of our decision, we will not see the correct picture.

You should first understand what the mind is. When people are sitting idle and we ask them, 'What is the matter?' they will say all kinds of things related to the mind. They will say, 'I am not feeling well mentally.' Some will say, 'Oh, lots of things are happening. It is too much to even think about!'

We talk about the mind as separate from ourselves. We say, 'It is thinking a lot.' We do not understand what the mind is and we start talking about it. What is the mind actually? It is only an organized structure gifted by God as a tool. The mind is man's servant that helps satisfy his needs and necessities in order to lead a happy life.

The reason for the problems is that the mind, which should be under the control of man, has become a structure that controls man. If a servant behaves like a master, what will happen? An immature servant becoming a master is like catching a monkey and putting it on the throne. That is why enlightened masters compare the mind to a monkey and even call it as the 'monkey mind' sometimes. Until the monkey is removed from the throne, problems and worries are bound to be there.

Here Krishna tells how the mind can influence or degrade our perception. In the Yoga Sutras, Sage Patanjali writes about the mind and perception. Yoga Sutras is a beautiful book written with so much clarity. The aphorisms or *sūtras* in this book are relevant even today and will be relevant to future generations as well.

Patanjali talks about how our mind is deceived by wrong perceptions and wrong comprehension. Patanjali talks about incorrect comprehension or *avidya*, which our mind uses to decide or draw conclusions. Our perception of what we see or feel is based on these conclusions. There are four branches of incorrect comprehension - *avidya*. The first branch is ego or *asmita*, which always says, 'I am better than others.' If our mind decides based on ego, if it thinks only of 'I', all our decisions will be biased. We will not see the complete picture.

The next branch of *avidya* is *rāga*, attachment. This branch demands something based upon our past experience. If the past experience has been good, our mind wants that more and more. Even if we do not need it, our mind asks for more. For example, let us say we had a heavy meal, we are already full; our body cannot take in any more. However, if we had a particular sweet ten days ago and liked it, now the mind will ask for that sweet, 'I enjoyed it before, I want more. Please give me more.' You see, this is the play of the mind. Just based on past experience, the mind wants to have more and more.

The third branch of *avidya* is *dveṣa*, dislike. This is the exact opposite of *rāga*, wherein the mind rejects based upon the past experience. We did not like something in the past. When we see it now, the mind decides, 'It was not good last time. I did not have a good experience earlier. So it is better not to take it.' Several times we do this. Just because we had a bad experience earlier, we completely boycott it next time.

The fourth branch is *abhiniveśa*, or fear, that creates doubts in us. We wonder whether others will accept what we are doing. We start having doubts. So many people, especially women, want to look young. They claim they are thirty when they are actually fifty. They want to appear young to others. This is based on the fear of not being accepted by others.

When our mind acts based on incorrect comprehension or influences, our decisions are degraded. During the first-level meditation program, we discuss how the mind works. We see something and we react to it. The reaction is generally based upon past experiences called *saṁskāras*. If the past experiences were good, the mind decides, 'Okay, good, I can continue.' Otherwise, it rejects it.

Krishna says, if our mind comes in the way of seeing what the truth is, our decisions are based on incorrect comprehension. When we are influenced by our mind, we fail to see the supreme soul in everything around us.

If we can keep the mind aside for a while, we see the truth as it is. Our mind cannot accept that the supreme soul is in everything around us. The soul inside us

knows the truth. Our soul inside us knows that the supreme soul is everywhere. But our mind creates a strong sheath around it. Our mind takes control over us. It harbours past memories (*saṁskāras*) and creates an illusion that leads to wrong comprehension.

When we were children, the mind did not have much power. When we were children, we did not build new *saṁskāras*. The conditioning by society builds layers and layers of these *saṁskāras* that give power to the mind. Actually when people say that a child is growing up, it only implies that the child is growing smaller and smaller, only the mind is growing up. The soul is being pushed into a corner and the mind is given more and more power.

This mind prevents us from seeing the truth. It stops us from seeing the supreme soul in everything around us. Be very clear, if we are out of the clutches of the mind, we see reality.

We are safe as long as we can separate the Self from the body and watch as the body reacts to materialistic things. As long as we know that the soul is supreme and the body is a means to fulfill our worldly desires, we are safe. We are on the right path. However, when we place the body over the soul, the problem starts.

We give so much importance to this body, but we don't really respect it. Instead we make use of it. We abuse our body. We watch television for long hours in the night. Our eyes call for rest, but we don't listen because our eyes give us the pleasure of watching programs on the television. Just because there is food in front of us, we continue eating. We may be full, yet we eat because we like the taste. We want to enjoy the taste. So we eat and eat, even if the body rejects it.

So many people go to beauty parlors and spas. That is the fashion these days. Women go to beauty parlors and do their makeup. They put on layers and layers of makeup and artificial nails in an attempt to appear beautiful to others.

A small story:

A newly married couple visited the husband's village for the first time. The wife was from the city and had never been to a village earlier. They decided to go to the temple at seven o'clock in the morning. Generally in India, people visit the temple early before starting their daily activities. So they wanted to be at the temple at seven o'clock. The wife started applying her makeup at five o'clock in the morning.

Anyhow, she finished her makeup and they went to the temple. In Indian temples, especially village temples, you can see monkeys, peacocks, rabbits and

other animals. This was the first time the wife saw such a temple. She was amused to see all these animals. She commented to her husband about the monkeys.

The husband told her with a smile on his face, 'Yes, I see one big monkey beside me.'

Women compete with the amount of makeup they apply. They think they are taking care of their body by going to beauty parlors and spas. Actually, they only abuse the body. They apply so many chemicals on their skin.

Why do we abuse our body in this fashion? It is because, through the senses of the body, we experience some pleasures. These are sense pleasures. These sense pleasures make us happy. So we hold onto those sense pleasures that we experience through our body.

But we fail to realize that they are momentary. Please be clear, all sense pleasures are momentary. If we feel happy through sense pleasures, the very same senses put you in sadness the next day. It is like those rotating doors. We stand and push one side while the other side pushes us outside the door! If we stay near the door too long, the door will rotate and push us back inside.

We consider our body to be a tool to experience the sense pleasures. We use our body to feel the pleasures from the outside world. We want to feel those sense pleasures again and again. That is why we take care of our body. We want our body to be safe so that we can enjoy. We want our body to look good all the time.

We must understand why we assume this human body form and come to planet Earth. Only then will we know the correct way to use the body. Only then we will know our body the right way. First, understand that the body that we have now is one of the many bodies that our soul has assumed. Whether we believe it or not, accept it or not, like it or not, that is the truth. We have taken many births before this life. We have possessed many bodies before this birth. Whether we take another birth, whether we have another body, depends upon how we lead our current life.

This birth that we have taken is to fulfill the carried-over desires of our previous births. These desires are called *prārabdha karma*. Our soul has taken this body to fulfill our *prārabdha karma*. When we die, our last thought decides our next birth. Our soul chooses the body that can fulfill the desires of our last birth. This is the truth.

Understand that we assume a body to fulfill the desires carried over from our previous life. However, what happens is that we create new desires in this life as well. We use our body to experience the sense pleasures and we create more and more desires. Because of this, we fall into the cycle of birth and death. Once we realize that our soul takes this body to complete a mission that it left unfinished in our previous birth, our attitude towards our whole body will change.

Our body is like a cloth. When we wake up early morning, we discard what we were wearing and put on fresh clothes, is it not? In the same way, when we die, we discard this body and take a new body to fulfill our unfulfilled desires, that's all.

People ask me, '*Swamiji*, why do enlightened masters take human birth? Why do they need a body if they are already enlightened, if they have fulfilled all their desires?'

There is a beautiful incident from Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life. Sri Ramakrishna was an enlightened master. He had regular discussions with his close disciples. He told his disciples, 'Once when I was returning from my village in an ox cart, some robbers stopped us. I started repeating all the names of Gods so that at least one would work.'

He then explains why even enlightened masters hold onto their body.

He says beautifully, 'A little of my mind is attached to the body so that it can enjoy the love of God and the company of the devotees.'

See how beautifully he says it. Please be very clear, an enlightened master holds onto his body out of pure compassion for others. An enlightened master wants to see transformation in others and he can do it more effectively when he is in the body. He does not have any other desire. He can leave his body any time. He holds his body through a thin thread of ego for the benefit of others.

We always want to get more and more out of our body. We want our eyes to see more television; we want our stomach to hold more food; we want our ears to hear louder music. We do all this out of greed. We want to experience more and more sense pleasures.

Instead, if we look at our body with gratitude, when we thank our body every moment for the support it has given us, we connect with our body at a deeper level.

Our body is the temple of our soul. We should respect our body. We should look at our body with gratitude, not greed. We should thank our body for holding our spirit, our soul. Then, we will see a different dimension of our body.

In our yoga course, there is a beautiful meditation that we do at the end of the class. It is called body gratitude meditation. You just lie down on the ground and relax every part of your body from your toes to your head. At the same time, you thank every part of your body. You pay gratitude to your body for letting you do what you have been doing till then. It is a beautiful meditation. At the end of the meditation, the truth strikes you. You realize what your body really is.

Here Krishna says, whatever we think we are enjoying, actually it is the body that is enjoying. Our body enjoys all the material comforts. Our soul can live without them. Our soul is pure consciousness. It does not need anything external to keep it happy.

Actually our soul is always in a state of bliss. It is always ecstatic. Our body is an embodiment of bliss. Whatever material things we think we need, whatever material comforts we think we enjoy, they are needed and enjoyed only by our body. Our soul does not need any of them.

The problem starts when we think that our soul needs these material things. We associate the happiness from the external materials with our soul. This is where the problem begins. We think the happiness that we gain from material comforts is because our soul feels happy to have them. That is when we accumulate more and more of these material comforts. We run after them.

Krishna gives us a technique here. He says, when we watch our body enjoying the sense pleasures, when we watch only our body being associated with the external material comforts and not our soul, we see the truth. Just witness the body. Be aware of your body. Observe the body when it reacts to external things. You will notice a sense of separation from the body. You will see what your body is. You will see that your soul has nothing to do with the pleasures you are enjoying.

When you do this, you witness your body and mind as if you are an outsider. It is like watching a movie. When you watch a movie, you watch what happens on the screen. In the same way, when you watch your body and mind, you understand what Krishna says. Only when you witness that the body experiences material pleasures and it is the body that does everything and the soul does not need anything, you see the truth.

Krishna gives a great truth in this verse. He talks about collective consciousness. He says when we see the supreme soul in all living beings, we no longer see the separateness. We see everything as one single entity. We see the whole universe as one single body, as one entity expressing the same truth.

Please be very clear, we are all connected. Each and every living entity is connected to the other. Your thoughts affect the thoughts of the person sitting beside you. Whether or not you believe it, this is the truth.

We think we are individual consciousness. We think we are separate islands. We think our thoughts are limited to us. We think nobody watches our thoughts. Please understand that the whole universe constantly responds to your thoughts. The whole universe is made up of the same universal consciousness.

Actually there is nothing *but* universal consciousness. Individual consciousness is a piece of the hologram of the universal collective consciousness. Have you seen a hologram? What happens when you break a hologram into five pieces? Each piece becomes a hologram again. Each piece shows the same thing as the whole piece showed you before.

Our individual consciousness is like that hologram. The universal consciousness hologram is broken into many small holograms or individual living things. But each one of us has the same consciousness as the universal consciousness.

All of us are connected by this universal consciousness. This is what I call collective consciousness. All living entities in this universe is interlinked. Any of your thoughts can influence me. Any of my thoughts can influence you.

Not only at the thought or mental level is this true; the deeper you go, the deeper you are connected to each other. We have seen the different layers or energy bodies in our system – physical layer, *pranic* layer, mental layer, etheric layer, causal layer, cosmic layer and *nirvanic* layer. At the physical layer, we see ourselves as different individuals. As we go to deeper layers, we see that each of us is connected to the other. The deeper we go, the deeper the connection becomes.

You see, in the seven energy layers surrounding the body, at the level of *pranic* and mental layers, the thoughts of one person affect the other. Even when a person does not say anything, the thought structure of the other person influences your thoughts. When you go to the office, just by looking at your boss, by knowing your boss's thought structure, your thoughts and energy will be influenced. Your boss need not say anything. He need not do anything physical. His thoughts are enough to affect your thoughts and energy. So as we go further to a deeper layer,

we connect at a slightly deeper level. When we go to the *nirvanic* layer, all of us connect at the consciousness level. The distance between you, God and me becomes zero.

The problem is that we associate ourselves with the physical layer. We think we are this body. We believe that what we see is the only truth. Naturally we think we are different from one another. We create boundaries between others and us. When we are stuck at this level, we miss the greatest truth. When we break these boundaries created by our mind and when we see that all of us are connected, that all of the separate entities are one and the same, we realize what we are.

You see, your individual consciousness is like an onion. Each one of us is an onion. What do you see in an onion? There are layers over layers of skin. When you peel the onion layer by layer, what is there inside? Nothing! You are just like that onion. You think the onion is solid. Only when you peel, you see that there is nothing inside it. In the same manner, if you peel all the seven layers, you experience that you are the collective consciousness. Once you remove all the layers, you see that every entity around you has the same consciousness. Everything is the same.

From the beginning, from your birth, society starts creating new layers on you. In the process, the innocent, childlike nature that sees the Self in everything is slowly lost in us. As a child you do lots of things through which you connect to the Self. You do not know you are different from soil or earth. That is why you play with mud. But what do parents do? They scold you. 'Don't do this. Don't do that.' They say, 'You will get dirty. Your clothes will become dirty.'

We continuously impose societal conditions on the child. The child does not know what is dirty or what is clean. The child sees the soil just the same as the floor. He does not see any difference. He connects to the same energy when he plays on the dusty road or inside a clean house. Adults condition children to see a difference.

Let me tell you about the *gurukul* system as it existed in ancient India. The *gurukul* system helped children connect to all the entities. There were no barriers put on children. At a very young age, children were handed over to masters for further education. The master took care of the children. There were no parents or relatives. All the children lived in a *gurukul* similar to modern hostels.

Until the age of seven, the children did not wear anything. They were allowed to express themselves in a natural way. They were allowed to connect to their surroundings in the best possible way. Easily they could apply Krishna's teachings.

They were allowed to connect to the universe at deep levels without barriers of shame or gender.

If a child is conditioned about gender or shame, it will not express itself fully. It will start creating rules for itself. It will start thinking, 'If I am a boy I should not do this. If I am a girl, I should not do that.' This conditioning did not exist in the *gurukul*. Children could express themselves completely. They were allowed to connect fully.

At the age of seven, children were given a meditation technique to keep them connected to the ultimate consciousness. If an idea came to them that they were different from others, this meditation technique diluted that idea. This meditation kept them free from ideas that took them away from the consciousness. The meditation technique is chanting a simple yet powerful Gayatri *mantra*. The children continuously related with the collective consciousness through this *mantra*. By the age of fourteen, they had a glimpse of collective consciousness, a glimpse of enlightenment or *satori*.

What do we do today? We buy shorts and a T-shirt for a boy child, and we buy a dress for a girl child. We buy blue colour clothes for boys and pink for girls. We create the layer of gender when the child is barely one year old, or sometimes sooner. We again and again pull them away from themselves. We do not allow them to be themselves.

When we remove these conditionings, we see that everything is pure consciousness. Only then we see that we are all the same. That is what Krishna says here. When we see that the supreme soul resides in each of us, we see that all of us are connected to each other. When we see this, we see the truth. We see that the whole universe is the expansion of the same consciousness. The whole universe is the expression of the same truth.

Q: You talked about the vedic system of education, the gurukul. How practical is it to have a system where children can move about without wearing clothes?

A: These days, there are nudist colonies. But the purpose there is sensual pleasure, not getting back in touch with nature.

Children have no inhibitions until the age of six or seven. They have no understanding of gender differentiation. They are absorbed in their own selves until that age. Their interest in the external world is one of learning.

It is possible that within your home atleast, you allow the child to grow up freely. For example, you might have seen that children after a bath decide to walk out of the bathroom without clothes. Don't condemn them at that point in time. Or, you might have seen that the child plays freely with its own body, sometimes with its genitals. At that time, don't pluck its fingers away. These are the few things you can do today.

Imagine the society that will arise, the generation that will grow up, when children are brought up this way. They will grow up unafraid and completely balanced. They will be the most sensual people on earth without being sexually driven by lust. As of now our educational system brings children down instead of bringing them up. They grow up with inhibitions, fear, greed, jealousy and a host of negative elements.

If you observe young children who have been brought up by wise parents who do not control and inhibit them, all their energy centers will be beautifully open. They will not have fear of anything. They ask for what they want at that moment and they do not have unfulfilled desires. They are not stressed by being suppressed. They do not compare themselves with others and accumulate borrowed desires.

In the *gurukul* education, they are not taught anything formally until the age of seven. At this age they are taught the Gayatri *mantra*. This *mantra* awakens the inner intelligence. The children are then taught various life skills along with scriptural truths. The education is well rounded.

The children are supported based upon aptitudes. They are not rated based on intelligence tests that measure knowledge. They are allowed to progress based on their own aptitude, at their own pace, and choose what they are good at. There is no compulsion to perform based on someone else's expectation. Again, you may ask, 'How practical is this? These kids need to earn a living.'

Please understand and reflect on your own lives. How many people here have been pushed into doing things that you hate doing? How many of you dislike your work? If you are honest, the vast majority of you will say 'Yes'. You have been pushed into doing what you are doing by your elders based on their concept of what you must do. You never had a choice to do what you wanted to do.

I meet youngsters who say, 'I wanted to be an athlete, but my parents wanted me to be an engineer. I hate my studies.' Don't think this happens only in India or

Asia. Even in the USA where children pay for their own education, they are often pushed into studies based on peer pressure or what others influence them to do. They end up hating what they are forced into. We then develop a generation that tends to break away from society.

When you do something you like, that passion shows in the outcome. What you deliver and how you perform is a reflection of your passion. You are automatically successful in what you do.

Without understanding and accepting, if you follow the rules of society out of fear and greed you will get nowhere. Understand what your passion is and follow it. Teach your children to follow their passion. Don't limit them with the conditioning that limited you.



Soul And Body

13.32 Those with the vision of eternity can see that the soul is transcendental, eternal, and beyond the modes of nature.

Despite contact with the material body, O Arjuna, the soul neither does anything nor is attached.

13.33 The sky, due to its subtle nature, does not mix with anything, although it is all pervading.

*Similarly, the soul, situated in **Brahman**, does not mix with the body, though situated in that body.*

13.34 O son of Bharata, as the sun alone illuminates the entire universe, so does the living entity,

One within the body, illuminate the entire consciousness.

13.35 Those who see with the eyes of knowledge, the difference between the body-mind and the Knower of the body-mind, who can understand the process,

*Are liberated from the bondages of material nature and attain **Paramatman**.*

Krishna again and again talks about the true nature of the Self. He tells Arjuna that the soul is free from all entanglements. It is eternal and transcendental. Krishna says that though the soul has come into contact with the material body, it still is free.

In the previous verses, we talked about how the body is the temple of our soul. We saw how the soul takes this body to fulfill the desires of our past birth. The soul actually does nothing. It does not entangle itself in the web of greed and fear. It is the mind that continuously adds new desires to the list and keeps the body running after them. Internally, the soul is always free. It has no bondage.

It is like the lotus plant in a lake. Water droplets that fall on the lotus leaves do not get attached to the leaves. They simply roll off and merge with the water again.

In the same way, the soul that rests inside this body is completely free from worldly joys and sorrows. It is like the drops of water. The soul can simply merge into the supreme soul. Only the body is related to the worldly happenings. The soul is not involved at all.

Krishna uses the word *nirguṇa* meaning beyond the three attributes. The three attributes of calmness, passion and inactivity are related to the mind and body. The soul is free from these attributes. It is neither restless nor is it lazy. It is pure. Actually it is beyond purity. When we use the word pure, then it means that the soul can be associated with the attribute of calmness. But the soul is even beyond calmness. That is why I say it is beyond purity. Nothing can circumscribe it.

One important thing we should know. Only when something is seen by the mind, do words come out. Words are an expression of the chatter that happens in our mind. When there is no mind, there are no words. When you go to the Himalayas surrounded by mountains, the first thing that happens is awe. No words come out. We are silent. Our being enjoys the beauty. Our being does not try to relate it to anything. Our mind has not yet associated any word to it. After a few seconds we experience the 'wow' feeling; it cannot be expressed.

In the same way, enlightenment cannot be expressed in words. There is no enlightened master who can adequately explain what enlightenment is, in words.

Associating the soul with even the word calmness, requires the mind. But the soul is beyond this also. No word can describe it. It just IS, that's all. All enlightened masters are *triguṇa rahita* meaning residing in a state that is beyond the three attributes. They have gone beyond the three attributes. They know that the soul is free from everything. They know that the body is the temple of the soul. They know that the body does not affect the soul.

Krishna gives an example to make this point clear. He says the space that is everywhere is unaffected by anything that is in that space. The subtle energy, space or ether, is present everywhere. Every molecule and atom has this subtle energy. Though it is present in everything that we see, it does not inherit the properties of what it resides in. Even if it is in a flower, it does not take up the scent of the flower.

In the same way, the soul is not affected by where it resides. People think that their soul will go to hell if they have committed sins. They think if they have lived a pious life, their soul will go to heaven. They think that the soul is affected by the deeds of the body.

Please be very clear that our external deeds do not affect our soul. One more thing I will repeat: there is nothing called heaven or hell. They are not physical locations. They are simply psychological states. If we do something without awareness, we are in hell. If we act with consciousness, we are in heaven and automatically our deeds will be for the benefit of all.

The external deeds of the body do not affect the destination of our soul. Our sins do not affect the nature of our soul. Please understand that by infusing awareness into what we do, we realize that the body does whatever we do. The soul is completely free from it. The soul is not affected by it.

Krishna says that just as the sun illuminates our whole world, one supreme Self, that is one *kṣetrajñya*, illuminates all beings in the universe, whether they are animate or inanimate. He says everything has the same consciousness.

Krishna gives more and more examples. The sun sheds light on the surrounding planets. The darkness on the planets is removed by the sun's light. In the same way, the supreme Self, *kṣetrajñya*, lights up all beings in the universe. The ultimate consciousness lights up the entire universe. All beings of the universe have this consciousness.

We may wonder why Krishna says the same thing over and over again. But He is trying to make the concept of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajñya* clear to Arjuna. Krishna knows that this is important and He wants Arjuna to understand it completely.

Anyhow, Krishna says something new here. He says that just as the sun illumines the universe, the soul in this body illumines not only this body but also everything surrounding it, the entire universe. He says:

*yathā prakāśayatyekah kṛtsnam lokam imam raviḥ ।
yadā nāham tadā mokṣo yadāham bandhanam tadā ॥ 13.34*

Kṣetri is the Self. This Self illumines all the *kṣetra*, all the bodies. Not just our body or *kṣetra* is illumined but all the *kṣetra* are illumined. The consciousness present in each of us is the hologram of the supreme Self. So there is no separation between the consciousness present in our body and the consciousness present in a plant or a rock. Everything is the same energy.

The sun lights up everything that is around. There is no partiality. It does not discriminate. Whatever comes its way, it removes the darkness from it. In the same way, the supreme Self present in us illuminates everything in the universe. Our ignorance separates the soul from the supreme soul.

Actually to even use two different words — soul and supreme soul — is not correct.

There are no two separate entities called soul and supreme soul. There is only soul. There is only one. Everything in this universe has the supreme soul. We can't even say, 'Everything has the same supreme soul,' because when we use the word same, it means there are copies of the supreme soul in all of us.

No, it is not like that. There is just supreme soul and nothing else. Everything in this universe has the supreme soul. Our mind draws boundaries. It is like creating borders between two countries. So many countries fight over boundaries. One country fights with the other to acquire more land. They are drawing and erasing boundaries all the time.

We think we can draw boundaries between the Self, which is present in us, and the supreme Self. We try to put our soul in a tight container made of greed and fear. We close the lid and are afraid to open it. Actually, we fear losing our identity. We associate ourselves with our individual ego. We want to show others how different we are.

Our mind knows that if it opens the lid, the soul and the supreme soul will become one. Our mind knows that the soul in this body and the supreme soul are one and the same; there is no difference between the two. So our mind fears that if it opens the lid, our whole identity will be lost and we will become the same as everyone else. Our mind does not want this to happen.

So we continuously hold onto our individual ego. Only when we realize that we are all connected, that everything in this universe is the same universal consciousness, will we break open the container and merge with the supreme Soul.

Here Krishna ends by saying, 'If we can witness as pure consciousness, we will be liberated from the bondages of the body-mind and achieve the eternal consciousness.' Krishna gives a technique to realize the eternal consciousness.

Please know that becoming the witness of the *kṣetra* is the only way to keep us away from the bondages of the body-mind. We must witness as the *kṣetrajñya*, consciousness. When we do that we will see the separation of the Self from the body and mind.

Understand that all our movements, reactions and emotions are related to the body-mind system. The way we move our body is a reaction by our body-mind system. Our emotions like anger, laughter, sadness and happiness are reactions of our mind. All of them are movements created by our body-mind system.

When we witness these movements happening in our system, we separate ourselves from the body-mind system. When we watch them like clouds in the sky, when we watch them like a movie on a screen, without getting attached, we see the truth.

Even the thought of witnessing our thoughts and our emotions is a thought that is controlled by our mind. Even that is our thought and implies that mind is still acting. Only when we go beyond that thought, do we experience the eternal consciousness.

Let me explain the technique. The technique may take at least ten minutes.

You are going to witness your body movements, breath movements and mind movements: movements of your body, movements of your breath and movements of your mind. You may ask what kind of body movements do we have? Understand that by inhaling and exhaling, your belly will be moving continuously up and down. There will be a slight movement of your belly during your breathing.

Witness that movement.

Next, watch the flow of your breath during inhaling and exhaling, without any attempt to control it.

Third, watch your mind. Thoughts will be going on. Please do not judge your thoughts as right or wrong. For a few minutes, sit next to your mind, like a close friend. Let it tell you whatever it wants to. Let it speak about whatever it wants.

Witness all these with no attachment. Do not stop, control or go behind anything.

We continuously fight with our body and mind. We cannot get rid of the body and mind by constantly fighting with them. We can only go beyond them through friendliness. Only if we feel deeply friendly towards them, will we be able to go beyond body and mind. If we have a negative emotion towards the body-mind, we will naturally abuse and only have a violent relationship with it. Accept the body and the mind. Witness the mind like a friend. Let whatever is inside come out. There's nothing wrong. Neither support nor suppress. If we support, we will go

after the garbage. If we suppress, we will end up analyzing the garbage and pushing it aside. Neither approach is going to work. Just witness.

Witnessing acts like fire. All the thoughts are burned away. Understand, neither suppressing nor supporting your thoughts will work. Only witnessing works.

When we go deep into our being, the witnessing consciousness automatically creates intelligence. Understand that we don't need to be in that mood all twenty-four hours of each day. Even if we get a few glimpses, that is enough. That energy will guide our whole life. If we understand the silence that happens to us when we are witnessing, even for a few seconds, we will taste it and start acting on it. Only out of these few moments does the energy of great achievement happen.

All great things are achieved from the consciousness and intuition that is beyond the body-mind, whether it is Einstein's Theory of Relativity or some other great scientific discovery. They are products of the witnessing consciousness. This is true not only in the field of science but in the arts, spirituality or any field. When we are beyond the body and mind, we bring the maximum out of our being. The ultimate expression of our being happens when we are whole. Whenever we are whole, we are holy. Understand that witnessing is the only path to wholeness or holiness.

Let us pray to the *Parabrahman*, Lord Krishna, the ultimate universal consciousness, to give us the inner space or the pure witnessing consciousness; to give us the ultimate experience and establish us in eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

Q: Swamiji, why do your disciples and people in your ashram communities wear white? What is the qualification for them to wear the saffron cloth?

Different colors have different physiological and emotional effects. Different colors affect your energy in different ways.

White calms you. White allows you to absorb positive energy easily and retain it. We are not talking about the commonly understood principle of white reflecting light and heat. When you meditate upon the cosmic energy or upon the master who is a manifestation of it, you will find that when you wear white, your ability to center and focus is higher. That is the reason we recommend that people wear white during these meditation programs.

On a lighter note, when they wear white, it is easier to see who has washed their clothes properly!

Pastel colors are better for calmness, a calm (*satvic*) state of mind. Brighter colors bring out aggression and passion in you, the aggressive and restless (*rajasic*) state of mind. Dark colors such as black enhance passive qualities like lethargy (*tamas*) in you. Depending on what you plan to do, you can choose the color that will help you reach that state of mind needed.

Similar principles apply with music and sound, with aroma and smells, with food and taste. That is why devotional songs follow a particular rhythm and meter, while rock music follows another. Music such as techno has been tested to be detrimental to mental health, as well as to the hearing.

Saffron is a special color. I doubt if this color is popular anywhere except in India. It is the color of renunciation. It indicates that you have surrendered yourself to the cosmic energy and have lost your identity. It means that you have lost your mind!

At various levels of renunciation, I give disciples saffron-colored clothing to indicate their levels of renunciation and to remind them of the need to commit to the path that they have undertaken. When energized and given with the blessings of the master, the saffron takes on a higher and more sacred significance.

This color has its own majesty. This color is far more regal and majestic when worn by the right individual than the purple color associated with royalty! This color makes you one with the universe.

*Thus ends the 13th chapter named **Kṣetra-Kṣetrajñya vibhāga yogaḥ** of the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Yoga dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.*

BhagavadGita

Drop Your Conditioning

CHAPTER 14

Human beings have the choice of being ignorant or enlightened. Most often we exercise our freewill and choose to stay ignorant. Krishna explains how to choose to be enlightened!



- ◆ *Swamiji*, I am not clear how the conscious and unconscious minds work. And can you please explain how the master helps in creating awareness?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you mentioned that meditation is the way to the Being and Krishna consciousness. Meditation appears complex and difficult. How can we become successful in meditation?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, is there scientific evidence to support *samskāras* formation?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, how can society exist without rules? There will be anarchy. If everyone does what he or she feels like, how can others survive?
- ◆ What Krishna says can be accepted if one believes in rebirth. What about those whose religious beliefs do not allow them to believe in rebirth?
- ◆ How do we develop spiritually? You said we are eccentric, that we try to keep moving inwards and are dragged outwards. What is the way to keep going inwards?
- ◆ You always speak of *ānanda*, bliss; you also talk about the state of grace. Are they the same?



Drop Your Conditioning

A small story:

On the last day of the school term, students brought gifts to their teacher. The first student presented the teacher with a nicely wrapped gift. The student's father owned the local bakery. The teacher looked at the package, shook it and asked, 'Is this a box of pastries?' The child said, 'Yes.'

Next, a student, whose father was the owner of a clothing store, presented a beautifully decorated gift and again the teacher shook it close to her ears. She then asked, 'Is it a dress?' The child said, 'Yes.'

Another girl came up with a nicely wrapped box. Her father owned a liquor store. The teacher shook the box. She noticed that the package was leaking. She dipped her finger in the leaking fluid and asked the girl curiously, 'Is this some kind of beer?' The child said, 'No.'

The teacher dipped her finger again in the fluid, tasted it carefully and asked, 'Ah, this tastes quite exotic. What is it? Is it some kind of wine?' The child again said, 'No.'

Then the teacher said, 'Alright, I give up. Please tell me, what is it?'

The child said in a worried tone, 'It is a puppy.'

The moral of this story is simple: Please don't put anything in your mouth unless you know what it is! What it really means is, don't make major decisions in your life based on your past experiences. Our past experiences are stored in our unconscious as engraved memories or engrams. They will only mislead you. In Sanskrit, these engraved memories are called *saṁskāras*.

We make faulty decisions when we make major decisions through engraved memories or *samskāras*. The teacher thought that the gift was a bottle of beer or wine since the student's father sold alcohol. In the same way, time and again, we make decisions driven by our engraved memories. The first two guesses of the teacher were correct. The first girl's father was in the business of selling sweets and the teacher guessed that the gift was a box of sweets. The second child's father owned a clothing store and the teacher guessed that the gift was a dress. Since the third child's father owned a liquor store, the teacher assumed that the gift was a bottle of alcohol!

Before we put anything into our mouth, we should be sure to know what it is, else it can lead to a lot of trouble.

This whole chapter of Bhagavad Gita is about engraved memories in our mind.

Engraved memories or engrams are the memories stored in our unconscious that drive almost all our actions. Even though we act upon them, we rarely know or understand where these decisions come from. They actually come from memories that are deeply embedded in our unconscious mind.

We tend to think that our actions are based on a logical sequence of thoughts. However, almost all our decisions have neither logic nor awareness.

Modern psychology tells us that almost 90% of our mind is unconscious. This means that we typically use 10% of our conscious mind. In other words, our conscious mind drives only 10% of our thoughts, words and actions. The rest is driven by the unconscious.

We have no control over how our unconscious mind functions since we are unaware of what happens there. Many unconscious memories are based on fear and pain. They rise up in moments of trauma or difficult situations. They influence decisions with no awareness on our part.

Scientists say that only a small fraction of what we perceive through our senses gets consciously recorded. Science says that we are only aware of 5%, perhaps less, of what we see or hear.

A real incident:

Our Bidadi ashram is located at about an hour's drive from Bangalore city. In the early days of this ashram, I traveled almost everyday from Bidadi to Bangalore. One day I told the driver to take me to a particular place along the way. I explained to him that it was near a mosque, a Muslim house of prayer.

The driver was confused. He insisted that there was no mosque on the route that we normally took everyday. I tried to explain that there was one, but it was of no avail. Finally, I mentioned another landmark, a Hindu Hanuman temple. He immediately understood and his face lit up with joy and understanding.

'Swamiji, why didn't you tell me that earlier?' he exclaimed, *'Of course I know where you want to go now!'*

This Hindu temple was only a small structure compared to the mosque. We traveled past both buildings everyday. Yet, this person was aware of only the Hanuman temple because of his personal preferences; he had no memory of the mosque.

All that we perceive is not true; all that we do not perceive is not unreal. It is a simple truth that what sinks in is only a fraction of what our five senses perceive. The rest goes directly into the unconscious. Yet this does not mean that these perceptions and the memories of these perceptions are forgotten.

Many memories of experiences are recorded even though we are unconscious of them. And these memories strongly drive our actions. Surgeons have recently understood that patients on the operating table under anesthesia actually record whatever happens around them. This is not fiction. Famous doctors have written books about this. They caution others to be careful about what they say or do in an operating theatre since the patient may not be unconscious as they believe.

As an example, doctors discovered the source of an accident victim's problem, years after the incident. The man had crashed his car into a tree and became unconscious. Some witnesses called paramedics rescued him from the damaged car and he was transported by ambulance to the hospital. As they lifted him out of the car, the paramedics talked about their day-to-day problems. One guy said that he had just left his girlfriend because she was trying to push him into a committed relationship. The words he used were, *'Life is too short to waste it this way.'*

The accident victim heard this remark while he was unconscious and it deeply embedded itself in his memory. This caused him serious trouble in his relationships for years. He typically broke away from commitments without knowing why. This problem caused him serious trouble in his career as well. Finally, he sought treatment and was cured when the memory of this experience surfaced. The source of his troubles was a conversation that entered his memory space though he was technically unconscious.

In fact, many powerful memories do not remain at the conscious level. They go directly into the unconscious. We do not recall that memory. Yet, it powerfully impacts us and influences our decisions and actions. The influence is based on the emotional perception at the time of the experience. What we term perception is not the experience we perceive through the senses; perception is how we respond emotionally to the experience. This response is a conditioned response.

In this chapter, Krishna explains how we respond to perceptions. In this chapter, called *Guṇatraya Vibhāga yoga*, Krishna explains the three different *guṇas* (attributes) to Arjuna. How we act... actually I can't say we 'act', I should say how we 'react' to every situation... is based on these three *guṇas*. This is how we create more and more *s* (bondages arising from our actions), which results in more and more trouble for ourselves.

Q: Swamiji, I am not clear how the conscious and unconscious minds work. And can you please explain how the master helps in creating awareness?

There are two things in you: hardware and software. Your mind is the software and your brain is the hardware. Within the mind, within your software, there are two parts: conscious zone and unconscious zone. Conscious zone is what you normally call the waking state, though 90% of the time your thoughts and actions in this state are ruled by your unconscious! We shall look at these in detail later.

The conscious zone is the software; the unconscious zone is the virus! The conscious zone can be cleansed by teachings. The unconscious zone can be cleansed by meditation. Now, the hardware, the brain, needs to be tuned to hold the changes in the software, the new experience that is created through the changed software. This can happen by the blessings of the master, by *dīkṣa* (initiation) from him.

When you clean the conscious and the unconscious and create an effect, the hardware may not be able to hold and sustain that effect from day one. If the master's initiation happens, the hardware also changes to hold that effect. In the absence of a living master, constant meditation and teaching can change the hardware. Hardware is like grooves created out of *saṁskāra* (stored memories) in the brain. Once the new software happens, the hardware slowly changes. However if you wish to immediately change the hardware, the master's presence is the right thing. Straightaway it changes the hardware.

Sometimes, without even changing the software, the hardware can be changed and the person will immediately radiate the correct software's quality! This happens when a disciple is completely open to the master or if he is in love with the master for no reason. Sometimes a disciple falls in love with the master for no reason. He may not be attracted to his teachings or meditation techniques; he simply falls in love. In that case, without delay, the hardware can be changed. Those kinds of disciples radiate the quality of the teachings and meditation without going through all of them. They do not have to go through all these things, yet straightaway the result will be seen.

As of now, your hardware and software are 'outgoing' tuned to the outer world. If you do the *cakra* meditation camp, the Life Bliss Program or Ananda Spurana Program, the software suddenly becomes 'ingoing'. It will go in towards spirituality, towards a cleansing process. The cleansing of the conscious portion happens through the teachings and the cleansing of the unconscious portion happens through meditation.

However, even if the software turns inside, the hardware will not be able to handle it. Then the hardware tries its best to retain its grooves. If the software is strong and stays in the same tune, the hardware slowly changes. However, if the *dikṣa*, the energy blessing from the master, is given immediately after the teaching and meditation, the hardware changes and holds the new software. It gets prepared to hold onto the new experience. This concept must be understood so that you bring in enough awareness to allow the transformation to happen in you.



Why Krishna Repeats

*14.1 Krishna says, 'I will declare to you again the supreme wisdom,
The knowledge of which has helped all sages attain supreme perfection.'*

*14.2 By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain the transcendental
nature, like My own,*

*And establish in his eternal consciousness, that one is not born at the time of
creation, or destroyed at the time of dissolution.*

*14.3 The total material substance, called **Brahman**, is the source of birth,*

*It is that **Brahman** that I impregnate, making possible the births of all living
beings, O son of Bharata.*

*14.4 Arjuna, understand that all species of life are made possible by birth in
this material nature, and*

I am the seed-giving father.

By repeating the truth again and again, Krishna tries to create an engraved memory of truth in Arjuna's mind.

Please try to understand why Krishna repeats Himself. He literally uses the same words again and again. Why? Why should Krishna speak the same thing again and again?

Krishna is a master who is result-oriented. He persists with what He wants. He is unwilling to compromise. He is not easily satisfied with the attitude, 'I said whatever I had to say; whether he wants to listen or not is up to him.'

No! Again and again, He repeats himself because He wants to create a memory of His teachings in Arjuna's mind. He does this so that even if Arjuna misses a teaching the first time, perhaps he will get it the next time. By creating an engraved memory in Arjuna's mind He wants Arjuna to follow it. That is why He repeats the truth again.

He says, 'I shall declare once more, I will speak to you about the truth, through the knowledge of which all the sages have attained supreme perfection.'

Whether we believe it or not, man by nature is a machine. He is a mechanism. Not only at the body level, he is a mechanism even at the level of the mind. At most, we can call it a bio-mechanism, yet he is still a mechanism. He works based on engraved memories or what we call *saṃskāras* in Sanskrit. He is continuously caught in the web of engraved memories in his mind and his being, because he works based on engraved memories that have been stored in his unconscious zone.

I repeat certain words and sentences, not because I have nothing else to do. These words and sentences have the power to go deep within you. If you allow them, they will help you transform. All you need to do is be open and allow these words to sink into you. As you hear these words, let the words penetrate you. These words carry energy to uplift you, to transform you.

Many religious rituals are designed to build good *saṃskāras* in us. Going to a temple, a church, prayer groups or *satsangs* (spiritual gatherings) reinforces our desire to move forward spiritually. They create the environment, the mood for the right decision to happen. These actions cannot liberate or enlighten us. However, they can condition us and program our unconscious mind to work in a particular way. They can rewire us.

People who have read a little about other religions and faiths feel intellectually superior and question the practices of their own culture. They call this rationalism. Rationalism in their dictionary means that all religious practices, especially Hindu rituals, are foolish and superstitious. They make no effort to understand the underlying truth of these practices. Because of their intellectual understanding and superficial knowledge based on what others say, they decide that it is foolish. This is especially true when other scholars, who have an equally limited awareness of their own culture, criticize the *vedic* culture.

India has been full of such scholars. Many of these scholars had Western education, whose main tenet is to deride anything that is not 'scientific'. They have very little understanding of the *vedic* culture. Like their role models, the foreign scholars before them, these Indian scholars learn Sanskrit just to read the *vedic*

scriptures. Their purpose is not to create any inner awareness, which is what these scriptures are meant for. They simply want to analyze them logically and find fault where logic does not fit in with the scriptural truth.

Science is about facts that can be recorded. Spirituality is about the truth that needs to be experienced. That is why our scriptures never bothered about historical accuracy and factual details. They dealt with issues that affected our consciousness. To understand our scriptures, we cannot use logic. We need to use meditation. Truth has nothing to do with our head. It has everything to do with our being.

People ask me, 'Can you prove the existence of God?'

Before his enlightenment, Vivekananda, upon meeting his guru Ramakrishna, asked whether Ramakrishna could show him God. Vivekananda asked this question not to embarrass Ramakrishna but because he felt deeply attracted to this master and wanted help in finding out the truth that had eluded him.

A young man who had read about Vivekananda came to one of my discourses in India. I asked him, 'So you read about Vivekananda?' Unlike Vivekananda, this young man had no intention of finding the truth. He wanted to show how smart he was.

He proudly said, 'Yes, and I ask you the same question.' Perhaps he thought I would be as humble as Ramakrishna was!

I caught him by his shirt collar and told him, 'I have not only seen God but I can show Him to you also. Vivekananda was prepared to follow Ramakrishna. Now, you too prepare yourself to come with me, and I will show you God!'

He struggled free of my grip and ran away. He was so scared that he didn't even look back!

God can only be experienced when we drop our mind. He is beyond our mind. How can we prove His existence through the logic of our mind? How can we comprehend the One who is beyond our mind through the powers of our mind? If we can comprehend Him through our mind, our logic, how can He be in any way superior to us? How can He then be God?

When we talk of divinity or God, we struggle with a concept, a theory, with our limited mind-power. We are doing nothing more than that. Because it is only a concept, we can prove or disprove that concept. So we become a devotee or an atheist.

It requires more courage to be an atheist than a believer. Believers accept God and ignore Him. They frame his picture and hang him in a corner of their house. A few people hung Jesus from the cross, we hang Krishna from a nail. There is no real difference! At least to hang Jesus, they needed to hate him and fear him. To hang Krishna all we need to do is to pretend to believe in Him and then ignore Him! Pretending to worship a master is the best way to escape from him.

To be an atheist, we need courage. An atheist probably thinks about God more often than the believer who believes and ignores. When we actively disbelieve we will automatically be more aware. An atheist is more aware of God than a believer.

God can only be experienced. He cannot be proved or disproved. He cannot be believed or disbelieved. If you wish to experience God, come to me and be open. If you have courage, drop your mind and I will show you God. You will experience Him in you.

Krishna wants to take Arjuna there. In fact, He already took him there when He revealed His cosmic form to Arjuna. Now, Krishna wants to take the rest of humanity to the same level. So again and again He repeats the techniques so we may realize our divinity. In His deep compassion He gives us a chance to catch the lifeline He is throwing us so that we can be saved.

For the first time, Krishna says that we will reach His state. So far He said, 'Worship Me. Surrender unto Me.' Now He says, 'You will achieve the same state in which I am. Anyone can attain the transcendental nature like My own.'

We can achieve the state in which He is. Krishna was the first master courageous and bold enough to declare that enlightenment is available to everybody; anybody can achieve it. Enlightenment is not an accident. It is an incident that we can create.

Until the time of Sri Krishna, the *Upaniṣads*, Brahma Sutra and other scriptures spoke as if enlightenment was an accident. Some people became enlightened; however, nobody knew why. Nor did they know why others could not get it or how exactly to get it. Nobody knew. They merely knew that some people were blessed, almost as if God was sitting up there and reviewing applications, and to some, He said, 'Alright, yes, granted' and immediately that person became enlightened!

Krishna was the first master who showed how to write the application or present the resume for enlightenment! He showed how to achieve enlightenment, which is not an accident but an incident. We can experience it through our conscious decision. He says that by being fixed in this knowledge, 'One can attain.'

He doesn't say, 'You can attain it,' indicating only Arjuna. He says one can attain it, meaning that anybody can attain it.

After the *viśvarūpa darśan* or vision of the cosmic form of Krishna, whatever Krishna shares with Arjuna is meant for the whole world. Arjuna already achieved what he had to achieve. After that, there was nothing else to say. Arjuna had the vision of Krishna's cosmic form. In the eleventh chapter, he experienced *viśvarūpa darśan* and from the twelfth chapter onwards, the teachings were recorded for the benefit of the whole world.

A scientist creates a formula to reproduce things in the outer world. A spiritual master creates a formula to reproduce the experiences of the inner world. Krishna says, 'By establishing yourself in this knowledge, you can achieve the experience, or you can establish yourself in the same state in which I am, like My own.' '*Mama*' means 'My own'. Krishna declares, 'This truth will directly lead you to the state in which I am established.'

Krishna talks about the truth that one is eternal, and not limited by birth and death. The state of being eternal transcends creation and dissolution. It transcends the past and future. Eternal is to be here and now. Eternal is the present moment.

Brahma is the Lord of creation. Creation is of the past. To exist in the physical plane, we need to have been created. To maintain is the job of Vishnu. Maintenance is about the future. It is about how we wish to be, what we wish to have, our desires, our expectations and everything related to the future. Shiva is the Lord of the present. He is the Destroyer of the future, making it flow into the past, by way of the present. He is the master of the here and now.

Shiva is the Rejuvenator, not just the Destroyer. The present always rejuvenates. In Sanskrit, *Shiva* means 'causeless auspiciousness'. The present is the most auspicious; whatever happens in the present is auspicious. We should develop the attitude of accepting what happens in the present as auspicious.

There are two kinds of people. The first type looks at everything suspiciously. They find everything unsatisfactory. These people say, 'All very well, but...' They cannot say anything without 'butting'. Such people can never be happy. They live with an idea of what life should be, rather than accepting it as it is. They are purely materialistic.

The second type finds everything to be auspicious! Whatever happens is as it should be. They welcome life as it is. These people are spiritual. These are the people who Krishna says transcend creation and dissolution, past and future. They live in the present moment and in Krishna consciousness.

Krishna is trying to answer philosophical questions that can never really be answered: How is the whole universe created? If everything is God, why is the universe created? How are we born? Whoever tried to answer these questions just created another philosophy.

Out of frustration, someone once asked me such questions, 'Why are we born? Why should we take birth at all? Why this whole drama of taking birth, meditating, then achieving enlightenment? Why? For whose sake is this drama? If we must end up working out our *karma*, why do we create *karma* in the first place? What is the reason for this? Why does this cycle go on and on?'

Krishna tries to answer these questions. However, this answer is not the ultimate Truth. He says, 'Please wait until the teachings are over.' Normally when we don't receive an answer for our philosophical question, we will be stuck with that question and not be able to enter into meditation. Again and again we will think of the question. We will come back to that question. Here, Arjuna also comes back to the same question again and again and gets stuck.

For the sake of meditation or just for the sake of giving him an understanding, Krishna gives an answer.

The other day I was sharing the same example using a mathematical formula. Let's say there is a formula ' $X + 2 = 4$ '. In the beginning, the teacher will make an assumption by saying, 'Let us assume that $X = 2$ ', then she replaces X with 2 and goes on to show that $2 + 2 = 4$. The problem is solved. Then the teacher says, 'Because the problem is solved, we know that our hypothesis that $X = 2$ is correct.' But until we come to that conclusion through a process, we can only assume that $X = 2$.

If we argue about the hypothesis when we make the assumption that $X = 2$, saying, 'Why should X be equal to 2, why not 3, why don't we assume $X = 4$?', we will not be able to solve the problem. Once we solve the problem, we know that X is 2. We understand it logically. But before solving, when we start, we must assume that $X = 2$. Some assumption must be made so that we can proceed to solve the problem.

Krishna also makes a small assumption and proceeds to solve the problem. Once He solves the problem, we will understand that what was assumed is the truth. What the teacher assumed was not wrong, but it was still an assumption. Similarly, Krishna gives an idea that it is not the ultimate Truth but a comparative reality. It

is a comparative truth. He says, 'I am the father, the *pita*, I am the root cause for everything.'

However, Krishna's words can be fully understood only when we experience the consciousness of Krishna. Until we experience the consciousness of Krishna, it is an assumption.

Even if it is an assumption, it is okay. Proceed with this assumption into the next chapters, into the next verse. Suddenly, when we see the result, we will understand that whatever we have assumed is the truth. Once the problem is solved, all the assumptions that we have made will be understood as the truth. Krishna makes this assumption so that we can understand the truth.

Q: Swamiji, you mentioned that meditation is the way to the Being and Krishna consciousness. Meditation appears complex and difficult. How can we become successful in meditation?

Yes, meditation is the key to self-awareness. There is no other way that you can reach Krishna or Shiva consciousness, and the state of Causeless Auspiciousness. Meditation is being in the present. It is not complex or difficult.

Meditation is a simple process. It is dropping the mind, moving away from the mind, seeing the mind as separate from you, watching it, witnessing it, and remembering, 'I am not the mind.' This is what I call 'unclutching.'

It is not suppressing the mind or senses or thoughts. It is breaking the connection between thoughts. Thoughts by themselves are unconnected. They are irrational, illogical and unconnected. We connect them and by connecting them we create shafts of pain and pleasure. Either way we suffer.

By disconnecting thoughts, by unclutching, we drop the mind and keep remembering that we are not the mind. Slowly the remembrance becomes stronger. The distance between you and the mind becomes bigger. One day you absolutely know that the mind is a mechanism with which you had become identified by mistake. You had become 'clutched' and now it is time to wake up from that sleep, that illusion, and 'unclutch'.

To become awakened means to know, 'I am not the mind; I am the master.' Then you can have control over the mind, and you will not be used by the mind

anymore. When you are free from the bondage of the mind, you are liberated, free and in bliss!

Any skill is acquired with practice. And it is the same with meditation. You spend years acquiring other skills and information. You attend courses and pay heavy amounts for bits of information that you never use again. Meditation is a life-saver. It helps you understand yourself. Unfortunately, it is not diversion of the mind; it is centering the mind. It is about giving up the mind. Naturally the mind does not care to lose itself. It does not like losing control. So it resists meditation.

The purpose of meditation is to bring you out of the clutches of your mind and out of the bondage of your thoughts. While it is not as easy as being a couch potato and watching television, it is not difficult either. All you need is the discipline to sit for a few days looking inwards. Once you discover the joy of being in control of your mind, you will never want to lose control again. This control leads to liberation.

Once in a while someone tells me, '*Swamiji*, I am fine as long as someone is not talking within my hearing range. I can meditate well. But I get disturbed by sound.'

Meditation does not make you deaf. You can hear when you meditate. In fact, awareness increases and you hear better than normal. The point is to witness what is going on outside without becoming involved in it. You cannot shut off your senses. Even when you close your eyes, you have an inner television playing inside you.

Watch your thoughts as if they are clouds floating in the sky. Do not become part of the cloud. With practice you can meditate sitting in a noisy mall. You can meditate with eyes open. All this comes with practice and sincerity. The only difficulty is the assumption that it is difficult.



Natural Attributes

14.5 Material nature consists of the three modes: goodness, passion and ignorance.

When the living entity comes in contact with nature, it becomes conditioned by these modes.

*14.6 O Sinless One, the mode of goodness, **satva**, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions.*

Those situated in that mode develop knowledge, but they become conditioned by the concept of happiness.

*14.7 Arjuna, know that the mode of passion, **rajas**, is characterized by intense craving and is the source of desire and attachment.*

Rajas binds the living entity by attachment to work.

*14.8 Know, O Arjuna, that the mode of ignorance, **tamas**, the deluder of the living entity, is born of inertia.*

Tamas binds the living entity by carelessness, laziness, and excessive sleep.

Material nature consists of three modes or attributes: goodness, passion and ignorance. These are called *guṇas* in Sanskrit. This translation is incomplete because there are no relevant English words for *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We do not have the right English word for *guṇa* either. We cannot aptly translate these words into English. When the eternal living entity comes in contact with nature, He becomes conditioned by these modes.

We may say that these are the different ways people behave; as the phrase goes, it is the good, the bad and the ugly.

Krishna explains how we are caught in three different mental setups. We operate through three different types of engraved memories. One is *satva*, the other is *rajas* and the third is *tamas*. These are translated as goodness, passion and ignorance; however, these are not exact translations.

Let me explain these concepts: *Satva* refers to the engrams or engraved memories or *saṁskāras* that lead us to bliss. These engraved memories lead us to joy and ecstasy. *Rajas* refers to the engraved memories that lead us to restlessness, excitement and to work intensely. They make us active and materially productive. The third attribute, *tamas*, refers to the engraved memories that lead us to depression, laziness and to dullness. Engraved memories that lead to ecstasy and bliss form *satva*. Engraved memories that lead to restlessness, anger and emotional imbalance form *rajas*. Engraved memories that lead to depression, dullness and low moods form *tamas*.

A small example:

We are like passengers riding in a car. Slowly we become lost in thoughts. After a while, we suddenly recall a person or place that disturbs us. The moment the mind feels disturbed, we come back to awareness. And we might say, 'I should not think about it; let me think of something else.' Sometimes we even speak these words aloud or make some gestures trying to ward off the thought.

The driver may look back and wonder, 'What has happened? What is he doing?'

When we are lost in thoughts and a memory arises that makes us depressed, dull or disturbed, we suddenly come back to awareness. We ask ourselves, 'What am I thinking?'

Sometimes we say it aloud, 'I should not think about this. Oh God, what am I doing? I should think of something else.'

Those engraved memories that automatically arise and lead to depression are called *tamas*.

Sometimes a thought suddenly comes up, 'I will not let him off so easily. I will see that he learns a lesson. I will not let him go.' We may unexpectedly make an angry gesture with our hands while engrossed in this thought.

Engrams that make us active or cause anger or violence and imbalance are called *rajas*. We are normally caught between *rajas* and *tamas*. Very rarely do we get *satvic* engrams. *Satvic* engrams do not disturb us. They give rise to a memory of deep bliss or joy that we have experienced. For example, if we come here

everyday, the moment it is 4:30 pm, an engram like this may come up, 'Oh, yesterday the discourse was wonderful. The meditation was beautiful. I should go today as well.'

However, if it is 4.30 pm, instead of that *satvic* engram, we typically get the engram to eat a snack or drink a cup of coffee!

If we are pulled inwards, if we are made to do something good that leads to bliss, ecstasy and peace of mind, it is due to engraved memories of *satva*, *satvic* memories or *satvic* engrams. If we go to the Himalayas for a few days, we may experience joy and peace. Then later when we see pictures of a mountain, the memory of the Himalayan experience suddenly comes up and we think, 'Oh, I should spend a couple of months in the Himalayas again. It was so peaceful.' Engrams that lead us to peace, bliss and ecstasy are *satvic* engrams.

These three different types of engraved memories or *saṁskāras* rule our entire life. Knowledge of these engraved memories is the basic knowledge that must be possessed by anyone who wants to live successfully. The *vedic* science of health and wellness, Ayurveda, is structured around the concept of *guṇas* and their effect on our body-mind system.

It is like an owner's manual for using the mind. Without an owner's manual, when we use a product, either we miss the whole thing, or we miss the knowledge of many of the product's applications and features.

There are so many uses and features of a computer. Even the humble calculator has hundreds of applications that we are unaware of. We may use the calculator for basic features like addition and subtraction; however, we may not take advantage of its other applications. In the same way, if we don't have and don't know the owner's manual for the mind, we do not use it the way we ought to, or to its full potential.

Understanding the three different engraved memories or *saṁskāras* is the operating manual for the mind. Krishna calls it *Guṇatraya Vibhāga yoga*. When we don't comprehend this manual, we are not able to catch the whole understanding of life. We miss so many opportunities. Because we have never learned or understood about the *guṇas*, we live only a very small fraction of what's possible in life. We miss the beauty and potential of life when we don't have the owner's manual.

At the outset, *saṁskāras* are not dead memories. Here once again we don't have the correct translation of *saṁskāras* in English.

We can never understand or fully appreciate Shakespeare's work in another language. If we read the translations of Shakespeare, at the most we will understand what Shakespeare was trying to express. However, we will never understand how he expressed it or the depths that he reached. If we want to enjoy Shakespeare, we must read it in the original language and not in today's spoken English. In the same way, if we want to understand these great truths, we must know a little Sanskrit.

When I ask people to learn a bit of Sanskrit they think I'm trying to spread the language. I say, 'No, for spirituality, a little knowledge of Sanskrit helps you understand many technical terms.'

Let me give the exact meaning or the idea expressed by the word *saṁskāra*.

Saṁskāra is not any dead engraved memory. It is an engraved memory that is alive and active. It has the power to pull us down and make us travel the same path again and again. Usually the word memory is understood as a dead record; however, *saṁskāra* is not a dead record. It is not a dead memory. It is not like the memory of a computer where pictures and Word documents are stored. No. *Saṁskāras* have the power to pull us down repeatedly and to make us walk the same path over and over. We end up going in dead-end circles.

Saṁskāras automatically attract us, call us and make us travel the same path. Then, when we do walk down the same path, the engraving becomes even deeper and those memories get further entrenched. Modern science understands this fact. Experiments have shown that repeated emotional experiences create more receptors for that emotion being developed in the brain. Physically, physiologically, the more anger outbursts you have, the more anger receptors your brain develops. This is a horrifying thought but it's true. The great *ṛṣis*, the inner scientists have known this for thousands of years.

If certain emotions are not expressed, the corresponding brain parts or receptors degenerate and die. So, the more we manage to stay out of negative emotions, the less they bother us. On the contrary, the more we indulge, the more our brain demands the same indulgence. This is the cause of addictions. Our entire life is ruled by *saṁskāras*.

Saṁskāras are living memories, not dead memories. The more we travel with these memories, the more we live with these memories, the more they become a part of our being. They take up residence in deeper levels of our consciousness. They get embedded. They get engraved into our brain structure.

Krishna explains step-by-step how we become caught in these three levels of memories and how, again and again, we are pulled and pushed by these memories. It is almost like having three wives. If we have one woman in our life, enlightenment is a luxury. If we have two women, enlightenment is an option. If we have three women in our life, enlightenment is compulsory! With three wives or husbands, one cannot live without enlightenment.

Someone asked me, 'Why did Krishna have so many girlfriends?' I answered, 'This is solid proof that He is enlightened! The fact that He survived despite having so many girlfriends is evidence of enlightenment. No doubt, that is also solid proof that He is God!'

Here, He gives us an understanding of how to live with these engraved memories. Another important point is that because these memories are living energies, they can be used for bad deeds or good deeds.

When a person has energies to do bad deeds, we can tap into those energies and make him do good deeds. From my experiences of conducting meditation programs in prisons, no one puts in as much effort and goes into such deep meditation as a prisoner. We conduct meditation programs in prisons. They are so involved and go into meditation more deeply in comparison to people outside. When prisoners take up meditation, they really take it up. They are intense. They don't do anything half-heartedly. When they are transformed, their whole life is transformed!

If we look at the lives of Indian *r̥sis* like Valmiki or the great saint Arunagirinathar, they and many others were sinners. However, a dramatic change happened and a cognitive shift took place in their being. The shift usually happens in the way that our mind receives data, processes it and delivers the result. Once the cognitive shift takes place, we receive data, process it and go inside instead of outside. As long as we react externally, we are working towards depression. However, once we go in, we move into bliss.

For example, the death of someone close to us, our near and dear ones, can lead us to the spiritual path or to frustration. We can think, 'Anyway, I am also going to die, so I should do what I want to.' Or we can decide, 'I too will die some day. Let me learn what I can and grow.'

A small story:

A person was about to be hanged. The officer on duty asked him if he had any last wishes. The prisoner said, 'No.' The officer said, 'You can pray to God. You can ask forgiveness and ask for His blessing. We can bring in a priest.'

The prisoner said, 'I want to remember God, but not in the way you suggest. Had I known earlier I would be executed for these crimes, I would have committed a few more sins.'

The prisoner continued, 'If I had known that I was going to be hanged, I would have committed more sins. So if I pray, I will ask God why He didn't let me know earlier that I was going to be hanged. I don't need a priest for that.'

When some people understand that death is the ultimate, they think, 'Death is the ultimate so let me work towards the Divine, achieve God, or realize *ātman*.' Others react differently, 'Anyway we are going to die. Let us do whatever we want and live the way we want to.' One group takes the path of meditation and the other takes the path of the outer world. The path we choose is up to us.

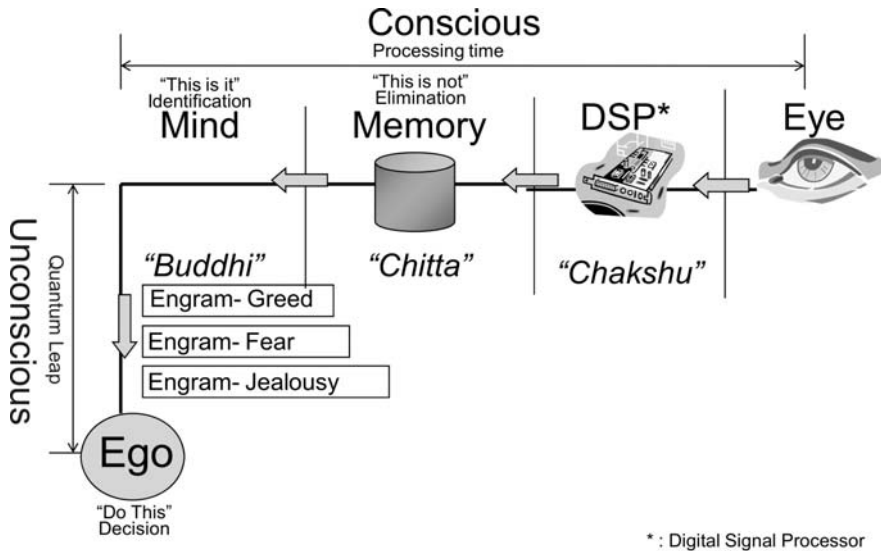
Engrams are living energies. Through engrams we can choose to either suffer and torture ourselves again and again or make our life a blissful experience. If we know the science of how these engraved memories happen in our being and how they can transform our being, we can take the help of these engraved memories to achieve eternal consciousness, eternal bliss in our being.

Krishna explains how engraved memories disturb our mind and through this understanding, we can transform our being.

Before explaining these verses, let me present a small diagram through which we can understand how engrams affect our decisions and how to come out of the influence of engrams. I have given a basic understanding of this diagram elsewhere, but let me repeat it so that we can connect with *saṁskāras*.

Please understand how we receive information or data from the outer world, how we process it and how we make decisions. First, we see something through the eyes. I have taken the example of sight but we can replace it with any other sense: like hearing, smelling, tasting or touching. Among these five *jñānendriya* (senses of perception), any one can be used here.

There are five *jñānendriya* and five *karmendriya* (senses of action) that are the means of communication between the external world and us. *Jñānendriya* are the senses of perception, the five senses of smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing. The *karmendriya* are five actions of elimination, procreation, locomotion, grasping and speaking. Each sense is related to one of the energy centers (*cakras*) in our body-mind system. For instance, locomotion is related to the *maṇipūraka cakra* (energy center located in the stomach region), and the energy of fire.



LBP Techniques help in removing negative engraved memories and add positive energy using meditation techniques

We can take any of the five *jñānendriya* to replace the eyes in this example. Through the eyes we see a scene. Let us say we see this scene of this discourse happening. You see me talking to you. First your eye captures this whole scene like a picture and this picture goes to the *caṁṣu* (the energy behind the eyes). Understand, we don't see *with* the eye, we see *through* the eye. There is an energy that is inside or behind the eye that actually sees. There is an energy inside or behind the ears that hears. The ears by themselves cannot hear. That is why when we are engrossed in a book, we may not hear the alarm or doorbell ring. If we are reading, we may not know if our spouse walks into the room. Of course if it is late at night, all wives know when their husbands sneak into the house, that is a different matter!

A small story:

A man goes to the police station to meet a thief who had burgled his home the previous night and taken all the cash. The officer on duty refuses to allow him to meet the thief saying, 'You cannot talk to him now. You can meet him in court tomorrow.' The man pleads, 'I don't want to disturb him. All I want to know is how he entered my home without waking up my wife. I have been trying to do this for years and have not been able to do it! How did he manage it?'

So there is an energy inside the eyes that sees. We call this energy *cakṣu*. The whole scene is converted into a file like in a digital signal processor in a computer so that our mind can process the data.

The *cakṣu* is almost like the digital signal processor or the DSP in electronic systems. If we are to work on sound or light or a photograph, it must be first converted into a digital file. In a computer, whether it is an audio or visual file, it must be converted into a digital file. In the same way in our system, whatever we see or hear is converted into a bio-signal file like a digital file. This conversion happens in this *cakṣu* area.

Then the file starts moving up, step-by-step. The file goes to the part of the mind called *citta* (memory). If we understand this, our whole life can be transformed. We will know where and how we react. We will realize how we make big decisions based upon our assumptions, and consequently suffer.

This is what happened in the story where the teacher imagined that alcohol was the liquid leaking from her gift and tasted it without thinking. We can understand how these mistakes happen by analyzing this diagram.

The file goes to *citta*, the place where past memories are collected. This area is where the work of excluding happens. When the file reaches this place, the excluding process starts - *Na iti, Na iti* - this is not, this is not. The process of *neti neti* (this is not, this is not) takes place in this area. Upon seeing this file, our *citta* starts eliminating whatever the object is not.

Take the example of this scene: First you see me, the whole scene is photographed. It goes to *cakṣu* and becomes a bio-signal file. The file is then taken to *citta*. *Citta* says, 'This is not a tree. This is not an animal. This is not a plant. This is not this. This is not that.' The excluding process happens in *citta*.

It is like searching for the word 'cow' in a dictionary. You first eliminate all other letters to reach 'c'. Then you search for 'o' and eliminate all other letters. Then you reach 'w' by eliminating all other letters. In this manner, you reach the word 'cow'. This is how *citta* works.

Next, the file goes to *manas*, another part of the mind. The *manas* tries to positively identify, 'This is a human being. He is wearing a saffron robe. He is standing on a stage.' The identification process, '*iti, iti*' (this is it, this is it) identification process happens in *manas*. In *citta*, '*neti, neti*' or the 'not this, not this' elimination happens.

Once this positive identification happens, the file goes to a third part of the mind called *buddhi* or intelligence. *Buddhi* is where the trouble starts. Here the analysis starts, 'How am I related to this file? How am I connected to this scene? How is it relevant to me? How should I respond to this scene?'

If past memories about me have been good or pleasant according to your intelligence, you respond in a positive way. You immediately refer to those past memories and review, 'It was so good at yesterday's discourse.' Your intelligence refers to the past memory and makes a decision based upon these experiences. If past experiences with me have been positive, your intelligence tells you to stay and listen. If past experiences have been unpleasant and you felt bored, your intelligence tells you that this is not the place for you and that you should leave. These are logical decisions based on conscious memories retained by your mind.

Up to this point, transmission of what is perceived by the senses and what is registered by the mind is relatively straightforward. It is a conscious process. I explained earlier about conscious and unconscious minds. Psychologists talk about a subconscious mind as well. This does not exist. This is a term used to further confuse you.

Mind specialists know that ninety percent of all that we sense goes into an unknown, unconscious zone and we are unaware of what we sense. It is a leap into an abyss. It is a quantum leap into our dark unconscious mind. There is no logic to this leap. This is shocking, but true. As a corollary, ninety percent of what we process mentally happens in an unaware state of the unconscious. The conscious mind is just the tip of the iceberg. Ninety percent is below the surface. We do not see it. We do not sense it and we do not use it.

The good news in this is that we have a great potential in this area. Even if we awaken another ten percent of this unconscious mind, the power of our mind can be doubled. Then just imagine what can happen. Everyone will be an Einstein! We can also learn to put that extra mind capacity to good use.

If the processing of sensory data is stopped at this conscious level, at the intelligence level, we make decisions at the conscious level by using our intellect. This is alright, however, it is limiting because the conscious mind is still only ten percent of the total mind capacity. This is what we call intellect-based decision-making. These decisions are based on logic and rationale. We are proud of this achievement. The French philosopher Descartes said, 'I think therefore I am.' He didn't realize that he limited his potential to only ten percent. What a sad state!

Because of the limited capacity of our conscious mind, nature wires us to use our unconscious mind to decide many things. Unfortunately this unconscious mind is a conditioned mind. It is full of engraved memories, beliefs and value systems drilled into us from childhood. All that parents and elders have taught us plus all that we have been force-fed by religion and society from a deeply impressionable age are stored in this vault that is never open to us. It opens on its own when it chooses to, especially in moments of stress and trauma. Just as viruses and bacteria attack when our immune system is down, the virus of engrams and *saṃskāras* influence us when our emotional systems are weakened.

Saṃskāras do not accumulate only during this lifetime. The mental attitudes are carried over from previous births. Neural scientists tell us about the part of our brain called the reptilian brain that stores memories of our evolution from marine and amphibian creatures. Religions may not accept this, yet science does.

From the conscious mind, the information is passed to the unconscious region of the mind, the ego.

I call this unconscious region of the mind *ego* not because it is arrogant, but because it provides you the identity of who you are. The word 'ego' is derived from a Greek word that means 'a mask'. Your identity is a mask that you wear. It is not you.

Your identity stems from your unconscious. You project who you wish to be, never who you are. You do not even know who you are. Who you are is deeply buried in your unconscious. All the major decisions that shape your life are consigned to this unconscious zone. This is the repository of all those emotionally-filled memories and beliefs about yourself, which constitute what you are and therefore, create your identity. This is what I call the *ego*.

The conscious mind does not make important decisions. It makes a few decisions that can be reached by its limited intellect. Anything important moves to the unconscious ego. Our unconscious handles all life-threatening situations, the so-called fight-or-flight decisions. Our conscious mind is too slow to handle them.

Let us go back to the incident of you watching me here. The problem arises if your conscious mind does not make a direct decision. If you have had past experiences with other persons wearing saffron robes, you will have engrams about that experience. You will not bother to see who this person is. You decide based on that memory that says, 'No, with that master I suffered like this; with some other master, I suffered like that.' It will be a generalized memory. You make a decision based on your past collected *saṃskāras*.

That is where we create trouble. When decisions are made with a straight understanding, there is no major problem. However, most of the time we collect and react based on engrams that are unrelated to each other.

For example, you see someone wearing a white dress. You may have been hurt in the past by someone wearing a white dress. The moment you see a white dress, the memory comes back even if you don't want it to.

In the same way, if we are abused or disrespected in a house, the memory comes up automatically the next time we visit that house, even if the person who did it is not there. We experience the same feeling, feel depressed and go into a low mood.

We connect and associate things with places, with triggers, with memories, and put them into memory files. We are not able to work spontaneously. We must rely on some technique, some method to reduce our processing work. Naturally, we opt for some kind of arrangement in our memory. Consequently, we miss out on real life.

Only in the first few days of marriage do we respond spontaneously to our spouse. Within the first few months of living with our spouse, we form a clear idea about him or her. After that, we don't really live with him or her. We live with our imagination of him or her. We live with our understanding of him or her. After that, whatever our spouse does is wrong. We come to a predetermined conclusion that the spouse is always wrong. If our spouse does something right, we say that it happened by mistake!

So after a few months, we come to a conclusion about the other persons in our life. We create an engram related to them based on our judgment. After that, we judge whatever he or she does through the filter of the engram, or engraved memory. Sometimes we create engraved memories in our system based on experiences that others have or from media influences.

A small story:

One day, a funeral procession slowly made its way down the road. A man was walking two bulldogs as he moved along ahead of the body of the dead woman. There was a long queue of people following slowly behind him.

An onlooker observed the number of people in the procession and thought, 'She must have been a famous woman.' He approached the man with the bulldogs and asked, 'Who is the dead lady?'

The man replied, 'She is my mother-in-law.'

The onlooker asked if the two dogs were the dead woman's pets. The man replied, 'No. They attacked and killed her.'

'Killed her?' the onlooker asked. 'Yes,' said the man. The onlooker asked, 'Can I borrow the dogs for two days?'

The man pointed to the people following him and said, 'Join the queue.'

When we enter into relationships with preconceived notions, this is what happens! We collect so many memories that we never relate to people as they are. We only relate with the preconceived memory we have of the person.

People ask me, '*Swamiji*, is our life pre-destined or open to free will?' Understand, the more engrams we have, the more our life is pre-destined. This is because we will go along the same route repeatedly. The fewer engrams we have, the more freedom we enjoy.

The number of *samskāras* determines whether we have free will or if our life is pre-destined. For example, the file travels to the ego, and the ego gives the decision, and we execute it. If there are more engrams, the file travels to every table like in a bureaucratic office. Each engram stamps, puts its signature and writes its opinion.

Take the example of attending this discourse and seeing me. One engram says, 'I had a master in my life. He was a blessing. He helped me a lot. I think I should sit here.' So this engram signs, 'Yes, I will sit here.' The next engram says, 'I read in the newspapers that these masters do this or do that.' There is enough written in the press, especially in South India, where being abusive to masters is fashionable. So, the second engram signs off saying, 'doubt'. Then the file goes to the next table, and the third engram says, 'I attended his discourse yesterday. What he says makes sense, I think I should stay.' This engram signs, 'yes'.

The file reaches the ego. The ego comes to a conclusion based on all the 'yes' responses and all the 'no' responses. Yes or no is not a problem; however, we have wasted so much time and energy on this small decision. For example, when we sit in our office, not doing anything, just sitting and worrying, we become stressed. Within fifteen minutes, we have pain in our shoulders. Worrying about simple decision-making leads to shoulder pain. The more engrams, the more restless and *rajasic* we will be.

People with many engrams never relax. People with stress cannot sit quietly. So much physical movement and physical restlessness is due to many decisions taking place inside their unconscious. This space between the *buddhi* (intelligence) and ego is the unconscious mind. Because we do not know what happens here, we don't know how many blocks are there. It is like an Indian Government office. There may be three hundred tables occupied by people who must sign as a bureaucrat to approve a decision. The file must move through three hundred tables to get approved. When it will move, who will sign what, and what the final result will be, neither we know nor God knows!

The conscious zone is like an honest office. I don't know what example to give of such an office! I don't think there are any relevant examples.

Take the example of smoking: According to the data collected at the conscious level, we know smoking is injurious to health. According to simple, straightforward data that we have assimilated, we know smoking is injurious to health; however, when the time comes, suddenly we decide to smoke.

How does the file take such a quantum leap? How is the decision totally changed? When the file travels to the unconscious area, engrams say, 'No, no! The last time I smoked, I felt really good, I felt relieved from all the stress.'

If we want to eliminate stress, wear a tight shoe instead of smoking. When we wear a tight shoe, we forget other worries. Smoking and wearing a tight shoe are the same. By smoking, we try to forget. By creating bigger problems, we try to forget the smaller problems. The same applies to wearing tight shoes. If we wear tight shoes, we automatically forget smaller worries.

Here, in the unconscious area, all the past memories reside: 'I smoked. I felt good. I felt relieved. All the stress disappeared.' We suddenly make a decision that we did not want to make, because of these unconscious memories.

We make countless decisions based upon engraved memories. We repent and suffer later on. Suddenly we shout and after ten minutes, we repent, 'Why did I shout? I always wanted to keep a smiling face. I wanted people to acknowledge that I have a smiling face. Why did I shout?' We repent. We made a sudden decision. We reacted suddenly due to these engrams.

We will see later how engraved memories disturb, torture and twist our decisions. Krishna says that we should ask our being how we missed reality. Why are we deluded by engraved memories?

Krishna speaks of *satva guṇa saṁskāras* that lead us to bliss and peace, *rajasic guṇa saṁskāras* that lead to restlessness and violence and *tamasic saṁskāras* that lead to depression. He further explains how these *saṁskāras* influence our decision-making process.

Let us say our radio suddenly stops working properly and we simultaneously connect with frequencies from three channels: One channel is playing an advertisement for a cosmetic product. The second channel gives instructions for farming. The third channel is playing a comedy drama. The result will sound like this to us, 'Please spray a little bit of pesticide. After that wipe your face clean. Now brush your teeth properly and put on a little more pesticide. Finally jump up and down and laugh flailing your arms and legs!'

If we try to execute decisions based on these mixed, cross-wired instructions, just imagine what our plight would be! Similarly when we try to work with different types of engrams, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and all three cross each other, they create hell in our lives. Please understand that intelligent people collect arguments to arrive at a judgment while most of us collect arguments to support a pre-existing judgment.

If we look into our life we will know: how many times have we accepted our mistakes? Of course, to even look into our lives and see how many times we have erred needs intelligence. We usually react out of arrogance or guilt. We say, 'So what if I made a mistake?' We brush it aside. This is one kind of attitude, the attitude of might is right. The other attitude is that of suffering from guilt.

Please understand that an unintelligent man never feels guilty. Of course I tell you to drop your guilt as well. That is in a different context. Only an intelligent man who thinks of *dharma* (righteousness) suffers from guilt. Only he feels guilt. A person who only lives and feels at the instinct level never feels guilty. An Arjuna or a Yudhishtira feels guilty. A Duryodhana will not feel guilty.

A person at the intellect level suffers guilt. Someone at the level of intuition goes beyond guilt. He understands the truth as it is. Krishna speaks of how to handle these three *guṇas* properly and use them to the maximum. Getting the maximum out of them is an intelligent process.

A small story:

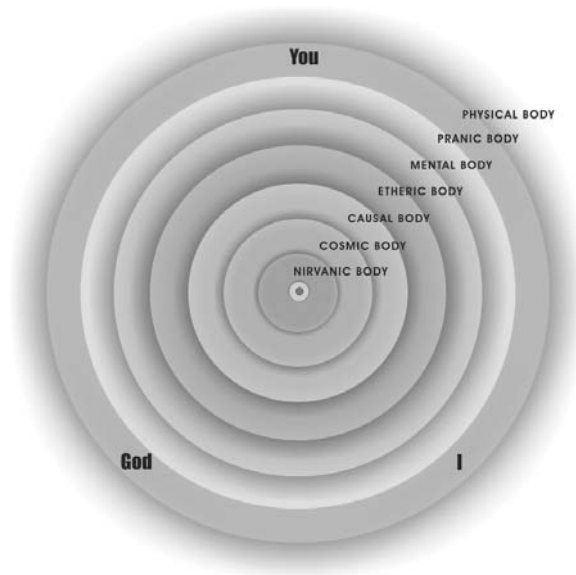
A young child swallowed a coin and was taken to the doctor. The doctor used different methods to no avail. The nurse also tried, still the coin didn't

come out. A friend standing nearby made an attempt without success. A passerby observed this and offered his assistance. The doctor asked, 'What can you do?' The passerby said, 'Give me one moment.' He spoke to the child and came back smiling with the coin. The surprised doctor asked, 'I am a doctor. I could not take the coin out. How did you do it?'

The passerby said, 'I am a con artist. I can extract money out of anybody.'

Krishna gives tips and techniques to get the maximum out of all the three *guṇas*! Before entering into these three layers of engrams, *saṁskāras* related to *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, let me illustrate how we are caught in these and how these engrams work. Then, we will enter into each technique.

These are the seven energy layers of our body-mind system. These are seven parts of our being.



The first is the physical body, our flesh and bones. Next is the *pranic* layer, the energies of *prāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna*, *apāna* and *samāna*, or the five air movements that take place in our body-mind system. The third is the mental body. This is where our mental inner chattering continuously takes place. A continuous recorder goes on as inner chatter inside us whether we are standing, sitting or doing nothing. Sometimes we open our mouth and chatter. At other times, we close our mouth and continue to chatter. Whether we open our mouth or not, talking continues. This is inner chattering or the mental body or *cancala*, which means inner movement.

The fourth is the etheric body. This is the space where our intense emotions and painful experiences are stored. Usually intense emotions are of pain and suffering. We do not know any other intense emotion. If we do, we are a spiritual person.

When we look into life, we see that pain gives such an intense feeling. When we are depressed or in pain, we become intense and our whole mind is centered. Our mind does not move towards anything else.

Have you experienced bliss to the same extent or depth that you have experienced pain? No. All we know is pain.

We cannot intellectually understand the three bodies beyond the etheric body. They can only be experienced spiritually through meditation.

The *pranic* layer is the body filled with desires. The mental body is filled with 'I should have' or guilt feelings. The etheric body is pain. Understand these three. Desire, guilt and pain are the feelings or the experiences stored in these layers.

When emotions, desires and feelings arising out of these three attributes are pure, they are called *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* depending on the quality of the emotion. Usually, they are impure. They are mixed with each other. We should know how to purify them. If we can purify our desires, we will be liberated. Please understand that we cannot live without desires. We can only cleanse and purify the desires, directing them towards the right path. Without desires, we can't breathe. Even inhaling and exhaling cannot happen without desires. We cannot live without desires. Desires must be handled properly. Desires must be straightened. That's what we need to work towards, *satva*.

Next comes guilt or *rajas*. Our restlessness is created by thoughts like, 'I should have done that', 'I should have lived like that', 'Because I did not do it then, let me do it now', 'I should have reacted in a certain manner; however, at that time, I did not have the intelligence. Let me teach him a lesson, I know what to do now.' This is how restlessness or *rajas* operates.

The third is pain. Whether we do right or wrong, we know how to make it painful. Whatever it is, we know how to create suffering through *tamas*.

The first four body-mind layers are influenced by the three *guṇas*. The mind cannot experience the remaining three layers beyond the fourth layer. They can be experienced only through meditation. In the fifth layer, the causal body, we sleep soundly without dreams. It is called *kāraṇa śarīra*, the energy layer that we experience during deep sleep. The sixth layer is the cosmic layer, filled with joyful memories, and the seventh is the *nirvanic* layer or the bliss body.

Just remember the first four layers of physical, *pranic*, mental and etheric energy. That's enough, because we will work only on these now. Krishna has already spoken about the physical layer. Now He works on the other three *guṇas* of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Satva* is related to the second layer that is the *pranic* layer, *rajas* is related to the third layer that is the mental body, and the fourth layer is the etheric layer of *tamas*. In the next chapter when Krishna explains about the other layers we will understand those.

As I was saying, *satva* is related to desires and the *prāṇa śarīra*. When our desires change, our *prāṇa* flow or our airflow changes. *Prāṇa* is the life giving energy that we inhale alongwith the air that we take in. Air is only a medium to take in *prāṇa*. It is *prāṇa* that sustains life in us. This *prāṇa* is affected by the changing desires in us. For example, if we are caught in lust or an intense desire, our inhaling and exhaling becomes intense. The *prāṇa* going in and coming out increases. With any desire, the *prāṇa* flow totally changes. If we are in a silent, peaceful mood, the *prāṇa* flow will be so mild, we will not know *prāṇa* is flowing.

Understand that this *pranic* layer is filled with desires. What should we learn about *satva*, about this *pranic* layer? Let me explain.

Whether we believe it or not, we are God. We are pure consciousness. Whatever thoughts we create in our pure consciousness gain power. This space exists in all of us and is called Self, *ātman*, or inner divinity. Whatever thoughts we create in this space, the deeper they are, the more power they get from this consciousness. It is like placing a slide in front of the bulb in a slide projector. That slide becomes reality on the screen. This inner Self is also light and any slide we create in this area becomes reality in the outer world.

But, the problem is we create self-contradictory desires. We suffer with our desires because of this. Whether our desires are fulfilled or not, the resulting suffering is inevitable. If the desires are fulfilled, there will be emptiness and if they are unfulfilled, there will be restlessness. In both cases, we move towards *tamas*. Why?

Why should we suffer because of desires? First, understand self-contradicting desires. For instance, if we want to get rid of a headache, normally we create an engram that continuously says, 'I should get rid of this headache. I should get rid of this headache.' We repeat the same words constantly in our unconscious. By continuously thinking that we want to get rid of the headache, we will never be able to get rid of it. When we repeat a word, in this case 'headache', we actually give power to it. The headache intensifies instead of disappearing.

It is a subtle understanding. Whatever words we repeat unconsciously become reality in our body, mind and in our world. It is because we have the power to give life to any word. If the words 'Let me get up and go', come to our mind, with those words, immediately our body will move, we will stand up and start going.

One word can make us do whatever we want. Words that appear in our mind are important. Words that appear in our mind are *mantra* (sacred sounds). When put together, all the words that appear in our mind form our life, especially the words that we repeat unconsciously.

For example, if we observe what happens when we brush our teeth in the morning, we see that our mind is somewhere else. For example, when we are in the shower, the mind is elsewhere. Especially when we take a cold water shower, we sometimes even sing to divert our mind. Cold showers and singing are closely connected! Since nobody is watching us in the bathroom, we talk or sing freely. Sometimes people even argue with themselves loudly in the bathroom.

A man was standing near the bathroom when his wife came out. He asked, 'Who were you arguing with inside the bathroom?'

She said, 'I was talking to myself.'

He asked, 'Why were you arguing?'

She said, 'I know what I was doing, so stay out of it.'

He continued, 'I can understand that you were talking to yourself, but why were you arguing with yourself?'

She said, 'You know me. I don't accept stupid logic. That is why I was arguing with myself!'

We play games all the time! We continuously talk without coming to reality. We utter the same words when brushing our teeth every day of the week. The moment we start brushing our teeth, we will have the same trend of thoughts. Every time we shower, we have the same type of thoughts too. If we observe ourselves closely, we will realize these things.

Thoughts that we repeat unconsciously are more powerful than words we use consciously. We create many thoughts, so many *samskāras* that are self-contradictory. 'I should get rid of this headache' is a self-contradictory thought. When we repeat those words we remember the headache as well. By remembering

the word 'headache' again and again, we bring back that memory and we bring back that headache into our mind. How do we expect to get rid of the headache then?

If we constantly repeat, 'I should get rid of this headache,' we bring that memory back every time we utter the word 'headache'. We bring that whole file of suffering back to our mind. How can we get rid of the headache then? Instead of using the word headache, create a *saṁskāra* such as, 'I should become healthy' again and again. Then we can remember the idea of health!

Whatever *mantra* or word we use, that *dhyāna* or meditation automatically happens in our unconscious. If we use the word 'headache' again and again, we will be meditating on the headache again and again. If we use the word 'health', again and again, we will be meditating on health again and again.

That is why when we start to meditate upon god, we start with a *dhyāna śloka* - meditation verse. Before meditating, we recite the *dhyāna śloka*. It is like the invocation verses that invoke god with the right words. In these verses we verbalize what good things we wish to visualize in our lives.

Verbalization of visualization is the *dhyāna śloka*. Now, if again and again we verbalize the word headache, headache, headache, what will we visualize? We will visualize the person who gives us a headache, or what we feel like when we get a headache. We will continuously visualize the headache scene and that mood.

Whatever we visualize again and again will be inscribed or engraved in our memory, in our inner space, in our inner being. If we have a disease, please never create and repeat a word that carries the name of the disease. For example, never say, 'Let me get rid of this heart problem. Let me get rid of this diabetes. Let me get rid of this high blood pressure' Use straight words, not self-contradictory words. If we have pain or an illness, use words like 'Let me become healthy.' Words create a visualization and energy of what we want to happen.

Always use these words, 'Let me become healthy.' Never use words like, 'Let me get rid of this back pain.'

Never use self-contradicting engrams. The more we use self-contradicting engrams, the more we engrave that disease into our inner space. The more we engrave, the more powerful they become. Please do not abuse the inner space or *icchā śakti* (power of creation). The *pranic* layer is our *icchā śakti*. It has the energy to make things happen. It has the energy to fulfill our desires. Do not waste *icchā śakti* by creating self-contradicting thoughts or self-contradicting engrams.

Self-contradicting thoughts corrupt our whole *satva* space. When you go home today, spend just ten minutes to do this exercise. Sit for ten minutes with yourself and write down the thoughts that come to your mind regularly. Then see where you are creating self-contradicting engrams and edit them, clear them. Don't bring self-contradicting thoughts into your mind.

The latest research shows that when psychiatric diseases are analyzed and publicized, millions of people across the world immediately start suffering from that disease. As long as we don't name the disease, people don't suffer from that disease even if they have it. The moment we inform them that these are the symptoms of the disease, this is what the disease is called, everybody thinks, 'I am suffering from this disease,' and they somehow contact the disease also!

Many people in good health experience symptoms of illness described by medical studies. Almost all of us feel giddy at one time or another, more often if we tend to get angry easily. This does not mean that every attack of giddiness relates to a blood pressure problem. Many people wake up sweating in the night. It does not mean that they are experiencing heart attacks. Yet once it is drilled into them that these are symptoms of dangerous diseases, they become neurotic. They turn into hypochondriacs. They become nervous wrecks.

This is a dangerous game. We should not let words created by pharmaceutical research companies about various diseases create doubts in us. This idea, 'I think I also have this problem,' gets created when we listen to disease reports and commercials. Immediately we create an engram that says, 'I have this problem; I should get rid of it.' By the time we finish repeating these words ten times, we will have the problem.

We continuously allow ourselves to be exploited by what we hear and see. People who don't know the truth of the mind and consciousness influence us. All these problems arise because we don't know that pure joy of inner space is possible.

Let me make a bold statement that no medicine or chemical can help our mind. All anti-anxiety medicines, all anti-depression medicines are consolations. First, we visualized that we suffered from depression and now we visualize that we have taken some medicine, that's all.

Let me share another important secret. It is a business secret! Many people say, '*Swamiji*, that person has done some black magic on me. He has laid a spell on me. Someone has put an evil spirit behind me. Some evil being possesses me.' There are

many people who exploit this kind of fear in others, cashing in on this fear. Understand: All such negativity has only one power, our faith in it.

All negativity such as black magic or evil or demonic acts, has only one power and that is our faith in them. Our faith in them gives them power. Because we believe in them, we connect all the incidents and make trouble for ourselves. And then we struggle to free ourselves.

When people come to me with these fears, I say, 'There is nothing, don't worry. There is no problem.' Then they think, 'This master is young. He doesn't know much. Let's go to an older person who will give us some counter-spells, some talisman, someone who will do some exorcism and remove this negativity and blockage.'

They think I don't know anything. Then what do I do to help them? I give them some talisman and say, 'You don't have to pay. Just put this under your pillow and you will be healed. You will be cured.' The talisman, the *yantra*, has nothing in it. I am clear that the *yantra* has nothing in it. The person has created an idea within himself. He has this negativity. By giving him the *yantra*, I create an idea in him that he doesn't have any negativity. It is like using one thorn to remove another thorn. There is nothing else in this.

I tell people, 'Don't think that by having these *yantras* something will shower from your roof. Nothing can shower from your house except rats!' These *yantras* are antidotes for their negative faith. They already created the faith that they have certain problems. I just tell them honestly, 'You created this trouble and now I am your help to undo it.' So understand: All negativity has only one power: our faith in it.

If the person who exploits these fears only takes money for it, that's fine, we can earn back that money. The danger is that he also creates an engram in us. He creates a *samskāra* that continuously haunts us. For anything and everything, we run to him like slaves. It is better to be caught in the hands of the ghost than in the hands of a sorcerer! At least, the ghost will trouble us only once in a while; however, this person will exploit us completely.

With the ghost, we have only mental suffering. With this person, we have mental and economic suffering! The big problem is that not only does he take our money; he also creates an engraved memory in the form of fear in us. With every small sound we hear at night, we think, 'I think that the effects of that talisman is over. Now I must get a new talisman.'

People in this business also give out talismans that need to be recharged! After a couple of months, we must take it back to be recharged. I was surprised when I heard about a rechargeable talisman!

All we need is an advertisement! I saw an advertisement in a newspaper. A man was standing in a pose as if he is granting blessings and he claims to be an Atharvana Veda scholar. I was surprised because this scripture of Atharvana Veda is not about such things. This scripture is a pure science to improve our life. It is a pure science to handle our mind blissfully. No scripture teaches exploitation of others.

In fact, the first Jyotisha Sutra (*vedic* astrology) states that intuition happens only to a person whose inner space is pure, who does not expect benefit or return in the form of money, good name or goodwill. So never go to people who engage in these *mantra* and *yantra*, spells and talismans. Also understand that evil entities have only one power, that is our faith in them.

Now, when we create self-contradicting thoughts, we start believing them. Especially when they name a disease in psychoanalysis, it is like the fashion business. In the fashion business, every week they launch a new dress. Similarly here, every month they invent a new disease.

By repeating that negative idea, by meditating on the symptom, we start creating that symptom in us. It is a dangerous game. Don't be caught in that game. We disturb the *satva*, the pure space of our being, by creating self-contradicting thoughts. So write down your major thoughts and desires and analyze them. Observe how many thoughts are self-contradicting. This is the first step.

Next, let us see how two desires contradict one another. We want to lead a peaceful life and we want wealth. With wealth comes responsibility as well. Either decide to take responsibility and be happy with that responsibility, or decide to relax and accept whatever happens.

Only one thought should be strengthened when two desires conflict. When we have both, we have a self-contradicting mental setup. In the *satva* space, in the *satva* energy, when we create self-contradicting engraved memories, we are automatically thrown into *rajas*.

Let me describe what Krishna says about *rajas*. The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and longings. This is a beautiful verse.

Krishna says, because of this, the embodied living entity is bound to doing result-oriented actions.

He talks about desires and longings. What is the difference? Desires and longings - *rāga* means desire; *trṣṇā* means craving, longing. What is the difference? Some memories have our emotional support whereas some memories have been inserted into our being by advertisements.

Advertisements are not only on the television or in a movie theatre. If our father repeats something time and again, that is an advertisement. If our mother says again and again, 'This is right, this is right. This is for us, this is for you,' that becomes an advertisement. Some desires have our mental support. We feel these will give us fulfillment; we feel these are our genuine needs. Some desires have been sold to us by someone else. That is the difference between desires and longings.

Desires are ours and longings have been given to us by society. They are a social conditioning. Desires are inborn. They are our nature. If we fulfill desires, we feel fulfilled and relaxed. With longings, the moment we fulfill them, we feel empty. This is the difference between desire and longing. Desire gives us fulfillment. Longing gives us emptiness.

Krishna shows us how self-contradicting desires lead us to *rajas*. When desires contradict each other, we get confused. We fall into *rajas*, restlessness. When the information about an object comes into our system, it passes through *cakṣu*, *citta*, *buddhi* and then goes to the ego. On its way, before this file reaches ego, it passes through the unconscious space of engrams that write their opinions on this file.

Let us say ten engrams write a decision saying, 'I want to sit and listen to the discourse' and another ten engrams write, 'No, let us go watch a movie, it is the weekend.' Ten engrams write similar decisions on the file, and another ten engrams write another kind of decision on the file. By the time the file reaches the ego, we are confused. As a result of these contradicting opinions from our engrams, we have inner restlessness.

The more engrams, the more time it takes to make a decision. We will suffer and be in a dilemma. Man *is* a dilemma. Continuously we think, 'I should have done this,' or 'I should have done that.' Dilemma is due to too many engrams.

Dilemma is what Krishna calls *rajas* and restlessness. In *rajas*, we have tremendous anger, violence and inner restlessness. A person caught in *rajas* shouts at others and experiences an irritable mood. He has a poisonous tongue. He waits to vomit out his irritation and anger on others.

Once we remove the *rajas* engrams, we can make one thousand decisions without getting stressed. The file will go straight to the ego without interruption.

To make a decision we don't need to cross three hundred tables like an Indian government office. There will be two or three tables. One says, 'Yes', the other says, 'Okay'. By the time the file reaches the ego, there will not be many differing opinions. It can decide instantly and send the file back for action. The process will be easy. Making decisions will be easy and our time and energy will not be wasted.

That is why Krishna says that when we don't expect the result, when we don't think of *karma phala* (result of the work done), we can do the work intensely.

When we don't expect or worry about the result, we work beautifully because there are fewer engrams. We will not suffer or be tortured by engraved memories.

In the next verse Krishna talks about *tamas*.

He addresses Arjuna, 'Oh son of Bharata, know that the mode of darkness, *tamas*, is born out of ignorance. It is the delusion of all embodied living entities. The results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.' This is a beautiful explanation of *tamas*.

If there are more *samskāras* or engrams, the file does not reach the ego easily. In fact, the file may not reach the ego fully. A powerful engram may make the decision on the way. It is similar to a 'non application of mind' in legal terminology.

Why does this happen? Why do you decide unconsciously and regret later?

This unconscious zone is filled with negative memories and restlessness. All our past memories and past thought patterns, *samskāras* or engrams, are stored in this zone as files. So many files are stored in this zone without any logical connection between them.

This is what happens. When the file takes a quantum leap to this zone, it does not reach the ego properly for a decision because this zone is where all the data that causes restlessness in you is stored. It is as if your computer hard disk is loaded with high-resolution photographs and there is no further scope to work on your hard disk. Like that, when your unconscious is loaded with past thought patterns and memories, it becomes inefficient and makes superficial, illogical decisions.

Take this example: According to data that you have collected, smoking is injurious to health. It is not good for your body or mind. You can hold onto this

decision as long as you are at the conscious level. But once the mind takes the leap to the ego, the engrams instruct you to smoke; you simply decide to smoke! The conscious process says, 'No, it is not good for health.' Yet the unconscious process just makes the decision and you execute it! It is a pure instinct-level decision.

When we have more engrams, we don't know what decision will come out. It is like a Pandora's box. We don't know what will come out since the inner space is full of engrams and *samskāras*. We are at the level of an animal. We act on instinct.

When there are only a few engrams, it is like not having three hundred tables for the file to have to move through. There are only a few tables, similar to a private corporation. This is the human level or the level of intellect.

When there are no engrams, there will be no need for the file to drop into the unconscious zone for a decision. It straightaway meets the *buddhi* and ego after the mind. There are no blocks. The time taken for the unconscious process will be less than the conscious process. We will be intuitive or at the level of God.

The level of an animal is the level of instinct; the level of man is the level of intellect; the level of God is the level of intuition. The level of instinct is the level of *tamas*; the level of intellect is the level of *rajas*; the level of intuition is the level of *satva*.

In *satva*, our mind works continuously and we make decisions, yet we do not become tired. We can be active twenty-four hours and yet remain peaceful. This is what I call action in inaction and inaction in action. Krishna says we will be centered when we are in *satva*. Though lots of activity go on around us, we will remain utterly relaxed.

The whole thing is dependent on one thing: our engrams or engraved memories. The number of engraved memories determines whether we are caught in *satva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. These three are not enlightened states. Enlightenment is beyond these three.

If we are caught in *tamas*, we need to move towards *rajas*. If we are caught in *rajas*, make the move towards *satva*. If we are caught in *satva*, it will automatically lead us to enlightenment. How do we do this?

Krishna speaks of *tamas*. 'Know that the mode of darkness, born of ignorance, is the delusion of all embodied, living entities. The results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep which bind the conditioned soul.'

For example, we create a self-contradicting desire at the *satva* level. Because of that we create restlessness in the *rajas* level. When we feel too restless, we drop

everything. We decide not to take any responsibility and we sleep instead. We fall into *tamas*.

Tamas is not only sleep or depression. Not taking enough responsibility is also *tamas*. For example, we are in *tamas* if we studied to become a doctor and we do not practice our profession out of laziness. If we don't practice for some other reason, that is fine. However, if we are avoiding because of laziness, we are in *tamas*. Don't drop out from anything due to *tamas*. If we drop out because of a spiritual reason, that is different. Some people drop out to meditate, go on a pilgrimage or to do spiritual work. That is fine. However, we are caught in *tamas* when we drop out due to laziness or for no reason at all.

Dropping out due to *tamas* means that we don't have enough energy and we cannot make a responsible decision. Why? Too many engrams block our decision process. By the time we make one decision, we feel tired and want to sleep. That is why we attempt to escape from life. Escapists are *tamasic* people.

Q: Swamiji, is there scientific evidence to support *samskāra* formation?

Good question. Surprisingly, the answer is yes. It is surprising because this is not an area that science has been interested in, especially medical science. Western medical science has focused on treating the body independent of the mind and whatever has been studied about the mind has been based on disabled minds.

A few path-breaking scientists have established that our genes do not determine our behavior; rather it is the other way around. In his seminal book, *Biology of Belief*, Dr. Bruce Lipton, a celebrated molecular biologist, established that our conditioning determines our biology. He studied living beings at the cellular level to establish their behavior, the positive and negative influences of the environment and conditioning and how they changed the very cellular structure.

It is also well-known that our brain functions differently at various stages of our growth. We have different brain wave patterns based on frequency levels. It has been established scientifically that in early childhood our brain operates at low frequency levels of delta and theta waves. As we grow up, they shift to alpha mode until about adolescence. Adult brains operate at beta wave patterns at over 14 hertz.

Low frequency waves imply a high degree of being influenced. Young children accept anything said by adults as gospel truth. They do not reason and discriminate. Authority figures influence them to a greater degree than commonly understood. This is the origin of *saṁskāras* in this lifetime.

If we extend the work of Bruce Lipton, behavioral changes that affect our genes and DNA will influence our progeny as well. *Saṁskāras* then carry on through generations. As I mentioned earlier, the presence of the reptilian brain indicates the continuance of evolutionary *saṁskāras* created before this lifetime.

The *vedic* system believes in the imperishability of the Self. The body may die and disappear; however, the Self or soul lives on. Matter perishes. Energy lives on. At death, the essence of one's lifestyle in that life carries over as *vāśana* into the next birth. This *vāśana* is the seed of one's *saṁskāras*. This is truth as I know it and as I have experienced it. Science will catch up with this truth one day.

The Life Bliss Programs and Ananda Spurana Programs are based on this truth. Our *saṁskāras* drive our actions. When the *Upaniṣad* scriptures say that our thoughts determine our actions and therefore our destiny, they refer to the *saṁskāras* that create and influence thoughts. It is possible to dissolve the emotional blocks created by the *saṁskāras* and eventually dissolve the *saṁskāras*.

At the first-level Life Bliss Program (LBP level 1), we teach methods to dissolve emotional blocks so that we can lead a productive life free of emotional disabilities. At the next level program - LBP Level 2 or Nithyananda Spurana Program, we teach how to work through *saṁskāras* at various energy levels in order to relieve them. Finally, when people take initiation to become Nithya Spiritual Healers, they are initiated into a meditative process that constantly removes *saṁskāras*. This meditation, called the Ananda Gandha meditation, takes one beyond the three *guṇas*. *Guṇas* are what generate *saṁskāras* and *karmas*. This meditation has the ability to make us a *triguṇa rahita*, one who is beyond the bondages of the. It is a meditation for enlightenment.



Guarding the Senses

14.9 The mode of goodness conditions one to happiness,

Passion conditions him to fruits of action, and ignorance to madness.

14.10 Sometimes the mode of passion becomes prominent, defeating the mode of goodness, O son of Bharata.

And sometimes the mode of goodness defeats passion, and at other times the mode of ignorance defeats goodness and passion. In this way there is always competition for supremacy.

14.11 When the light of Self-knowledge illuminates all the senses (or gates) in the body,

Then it should be known that goodness is predominant.

14.12 O chief of Bharata, when there is an increase in the mode of passion, the symptoms of great attachment, uncontrollable desire, hankering, and intense endeavor develop.

Krishna further explains the three modes.

‘O Bharata, sometimes the mode of goodness, *satva*, becomes prominent, defeating the modes of passion and ignorance, and at other times, ignorance defeats goodness and passion, in this way, there is always competition for supremacy.’

All of us are not completely caught in *satva* or *rajas* or *tamas*. We swing between *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We go from this end to that end, and from that end to this end.

Sometimes we get up in the morning and feel fresh. We feel as if all our questions are answered; we are fresh, alive and we think we have become almost

enlightened! Everything goes beautifully until evening. Suddenly we become restless. The very next day, we are in *tamas*. We don't want to do anything. These mood swings take place continuously.

Obesity and mood swings are closely related. When we allow these mood swings to happen, we torture ourselves. Sometimes we are restless, sometimes we are peaceful and sometimes we are in *tamas*. When we are in *tamas* we don't want to do anything; we want to escape from everything; we want to dump everything and run away. We are caught in these three modes of nature: sometimes in instinct, sometimes in intellect and sometimes in intelligence.

Why? Why do we have mood swings?

This happens if we have collected too many *samskāras* about something over many years. For example, we have many engrams about drinking, if from a young age, we were repeatedly taught not to drink and that drinking is a sin. This raises our curiosity and we are tempted to taste alcohol at least once. Never give a law to children. Instead give them understanding and the spirit behind the law.

If we want to bring up children blissfully, we need to bring them up without guilt. Following rules without understanding them leads to breaking the rules. Breaking rules creates guilt. Guilt is the worst imaginable sin. To give understanding, we need two things. First we need to be intelligent enough to understand the meaning behind the rules we are trying to enforce. Next we need patience to explain it all to them. Even though it takes more time and energy, focus on giving them understanding.

Never give rules if you want people to follow them! If we give a rule, they will do the opposite of the rule. Furthermore, we can't even predict that they will do the exact opposite. Even though it requires time and energy, take time and raise children with understanding.

People complain to me, 'Swamiji, in these modern times, there is no time. My daughter goes to school. I have a job. How do we find time to make her understand?' I say, 'Why did you give birth to your child if you don't have time to bring her up? You should have become a *sanyāsi* like me! You should have decided earlier in life.'

A mother brought her child to me and said, 'Swamiji, please advise him. Please ask him to obey me.'

I was not keen on giving that advice because I myself didn't listen to or obey my mother when I was young! How could I give that advice? But I could

not say that to the woman. So I decided to make her happy by advising her son.

She continued, '*Swamiji*, you must advise him.'

I tried to escape two or three times, but to no avail. Finally I called the boy and gently said, 'Why don't you obey your mother? I am also obeying her right now! Why don't you listen to what she says?'

You will be surprised to hear the boy's reply. He explained, '*Swamiji*, she is not happy. If I listen to her advice I will become like her. Why are you asking me to listen to her?'

I was taken aback. He was speaking the truth.

I somehow convinced him and sent him away; however, I was not convinced. He said the truth. If the mother was unhappy how could the son follow her advice?

In the near future, children will sue parents if they don't bring them up properly. They have already started doing it. Kids who are depressed or in prison claim their problems are due to their parents raising them improperly. Instead of bringing them up, they brought them down.

Before deciding to have children, become enlightened. That is the only qualification we need. Unless we are clear as to how to guide them, we should not plan to have children. The world is populated enough. We have brought many billions of people to planet earth. If we can't provide food, medicine and shelter to those already here, why bring in more people? Where is the place? Where are the resources?

If you decide to have children, have the intelligence to give them the understanding behind all that you tell them. Whatever you give in the form of understanding gets recorded in the *satva* layer. This understanding becomes intelligence. Whatever you give as a rule and command sits in the *rajas* and *tamas* layers. Even if it is good advice, don't give it as a rule. If good advice is given as a rule, it creates an aversion in them.

When parents bring their kids to me, they force them to touch my feet. I say, 'Never do that. This is your greed.' These parents think that they and their children get *punya* or good credits by touching my feet. They impose this idea on their kids, an idea based on their greed.

By forcing the kids, they make the kids hate me. Some parents push their kids' heads down to my feet, as if they will receive positive current from my feet! I ask these parents not to force them. *Namaskār* (joining your hands in respect) is more than enough. By forcing them, they make the kids hate me. The next time these kids see the orange robe, they will grumble, 'Oh, now we must do that exercise.'

Never enforce rules on kids. We are suffering from rules given to us by our parents. The rules given by our parents are in our *rajas* and *tamas* layers. They lead us to restlessness and deep depression again and again. They create more and more trouble for us.

Desire and guilt are two forms of the same energy. One is related to the future. The other is related to the past. Desire is related to the future. Guilt is related to the past. 'I should have done that' plays a major role in our 'I should do this.' 'I should do this' is determined by 'I should have done that.'

Guilt that is created by rules handed down to us by our elders creates hell in our life and leads us to *tamas*. Krishna says we are led to *antaha* (the end). We fall into ignorance or into the end.

Krishna says the manifestations of the modes of goodness can be experienced when all the gates of the body are illuminated by knowledge. This is the technique. The gates of the body are the gates through which we receive knowledge or information: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the sense of touch or physical pleasure. These are the files through which we receive information from outside. He says that we should keep these five carefully guarded by *prakāśa* (illuminated knowledge). We should ensure security at these gates and knowledge is that security.

We should have knowledge about what should be taken in and what should not be taken in. Knowing this, we will reside in *satva* forever. We will reside in bliss forever. He says we should appoint a guard for the gates of our body. There is no security system for our body. We have security for our home. If someone breaks in, automatically the call goes to 911. Every neighborhood posts notices saying, 'This neighborhood is being watched by this detective or security system.' In the USA, there are many security systems for a home where people spend only ten or twelve hours per day inside their homes. People spend a maximum of twelve hours at their home and they spend the remaining twelve hours outside the home. We reside twenty-four hours every day in this house called our body, yet we don't have a security system!

Ramana Maharshi sings in beautiful homage to the sacred Arunachala Hill in Tiruvannamalai in his famous song 'Arunachala Aksharamanamalai', 'When these thieves, the five senses, have entered into the house, Oh Arunachala, were you not at home? How did they enter?' He asks Shiva, 'When these five senses entered the house (body-mind), were you not there? Why did you let them enter?'

Krishna says, let us have the security, the protection of knowledge at the five gates, and we will reside in continuous bliss.

This means that we should not allow thoughts that create suffering to enter our mind through the eyes and other senses. This means, avoid the television. At least do not watch programs that create depression. We should only watch programs that give joy and make us blissful. We should never watch anything that makes us cunning, that gives us suffering or makes us feel violent.

When we protect our senses with *satva*, we will not allow negative engrams to come in. People immediately ask me, 'If we don't know what is happening in society, how can we live?'

Don't worry about those things. Any important or urgent news will reach us through somebody in some way. We are not living on an island. Moreover, by gaining knowledge of criminal activities through media, there is nothing much we can do. Newspapers carry the same news everyday. Most of it is about murder, rape, theft, and accidents. The only difference is in the city or country where it takes place. Instead of reading the news everyday, we can predict what is going to happen and where! Why do we want to read and verify this? Only the place and numbers vary anyway.

What difference will it make to our life? If the people who handle the situation know about it, that is enough. When we imbibe continuous information of this kind, we create engrams. We create fear strokes and suffering. If we continuously read about kidnapping, if our husband or kid is late by a few minutes, we start worrying. We become restless. If something wrong really happens, we will suffer only on the day when it happens. However, when we create engrams that generate anxiety, we suffer everyday. Can we stop it from happening, and if we can, how?

If we can stop it, no problem; then it is intelligence. Whatever can stop this worry from materializing is intelligence. But most of the time we collect these engrams that we can neither stop nor do anything with. We simply suffer. We put ourselves into *rajas* and *tamas* again and again.

Please do not infuse your consciousness with thoughts that create suffering in you. Continuously add thoughts that give bliss and peace. We may think this is impractical. We may think, 'How can we live in society without knowing what's going on in the world?' Be very clear, knowing what's going on in the world is a disease. Collecting information is a disease. The other day, someone said, 'Swamiji, we should watch television to get an idea of the culture.' However these television shows are trash. They are nonsensical. The more we watch, the more negativity we imbibe.

Watching television shows creates engrams in our unconscious mind about the standard of life. I tried watching television but could not watch for more than five minutes. I said, 'Enough, otherwise I will lose my enlightenment! Traditionally we believe enlightenment cannot be taken away, but now I think the television can take it away! Enough.' Ramakrishna says beautifully that we belch the smell of that which we eat. What we take in via the television is a form of food for the senses. If we continuously see and listen to these negative things, we belch all that negativity into our lives. We set unreasonable standards for ourselves based on what input goes inside us.

Life is much too valuable and too short to be spent worrying. Do not allow thoughts that create depression, low mood and longing, into your system, especially at *sandhyā* time - the twilight time at which day and night meet. Our ancient masters knew that *sandhyā* time, when day and night meet, is a critical time. There are two *sandhyās*, dawn and dusk. Our masters knew that whatever thought-seeds are sown inside our being at *sandhyā* come out as full-blown trees. That is why the masters insisted that at *sandhyā* time, one should spend time in a temple, praying, listening to prayers, reading devotional material or meditating. These spiritual ideas go inside as seeds and become a valuable tree in our life.

These days, we watch television at *sandhyā* time. We put all the trash inside like in a trashcan and the next day we get the smell of it. Never put negative *saṁskāras* inside you especially at this time.

Protect your senses twenty-four hours a day. If you cannot, protect yourself at least during *sandhyā* time. *Sandhyā* is the one and half hours of clairvoyance when day and night meet. In India it is 6:00 – 7:30 in the morning and evening, at sunrise and sunset. This period varies from country to country. During *sandhyā* we should not allow negative engrams to enter our being. Whatever enters our being during *sandhyā* exists or radiates throughout our life. Krishna gives this one advice, this one technique because this is the way we can turn it around. Using this technique we transform and the cognitive shift can happen.

As of now, cognition happens in our mind based upon our negative engrams. If we change the input, if we move our mental setup into a different energy zone or vibration, the cognitive shift happens. We process data with positive engrams, with a positive base.

Krishna gives one technique, one suggestion: Protect the five senses from negative ideas and infuse positive ideas through the five senses. Whatever we feed upon becomes our being and we radiate that energy. Spend *sandhyā* time in a good way. Meditate at home during this time. If you don't meditate, go to a temple or church and do something spiritual at this time. Recite a verse, say prayers or do some good work instead of wasting time and adding negative engrams. The more negative engrams we put inside, the more we move towards depression.

The more money we deposit into the bank, the higher our bank balance. The more negative engrams we have, the more our depression. Our masters knew where man would collect positive engrams and where man would collect negative engrams. They created many spaces where man could collect positive engrams and protect himself. Please understand this one suggestion from Krishna and save the body with pure *satvic* security, and experience bliss.

Krishna explained earlier that when one is aware, one is in *satva*. Now He explains what happens to someone in *rajas*.

Krishna says that attachment, greed, craving and restless action are indications of *rajasic* behavior. This fits most people, but it fits most aptly anyone in business or a corporate career.

Greed is the corporate creed. Every employee will be told that the sky is the limit, even if they spend their entire life behind one small table in a dark and dingy room. They may not even have a window to look out at the sky. People who recruit and train employees use motivation as their only tool. What is motivation?

The whole idea of motivating someone is ill-motivated. To motivate someone, we must hold a carrot in front of him or her. Then the carrot becomes the goal. If we are donkeys, we follow the carrot. If we have any intelligence, we will realize that the carrot will always be dangled in front of us just out of reach!

Even if the carrot is within reach and is eaten by the donkey, will it be satisfied by one carrot? Never. It will ask for more carrots. That is why the man who drives the donkey is clever enough to keep it out of reach.

The donkey runs after the carrot in restless action. It cannot stay still. The carrot is so near and yet so far. So how can it stay still? This is the story of the

corporate people. Business people complain, '*Swamiji*, business is so tough. No one is honest these days. Everyone is a cheat. I cannot trust anyone. I am experiencing financial losses. I do not know how long I can afford to continue. Please advise me.'

They are smart. They do not say, 'Please help me.' They say, 'Please advise me.' Then I am caught! If I advise them to do something, they can hold me responsible later. They can come back and say, '*Swamiji*, you told me to do that. It did not work. Now please help me out.'

I tell them, 'If business is difficult, and you cannot trust anybody and you are making no money, what is the point? Stop doing business. Close your business. Relax.'

They explode, 'Oh my God, *Swamiji*, how can you say that? What will I do then? How will I live?'

On the one hand, they say that they are losing money. On the other hand, when I tell them how to stop the losses, they ask how they will live! What kind of a drama is this? We may laugh, yet each of us is in this kind of a drama, a psychodrama of our own making.

We are like a wind-up toy. We have been fully wound and each time the spring relaxes, something inside winds us up again. We are like that battery bunny in television advertisements. We move continuously. We cannot rest. We think this movement is the purpose of our life.

Our life has no purpose. There is no goal to life. Living itself is the path and the goal. If we are aware, in *satva*, we enjoy the path; we enjoy the journey. We do not care where we are going, so long as the path is enjoyable. So long as we enjoy the path, it is the right path and our destination will be right.

But instead of enjoying the path, we worry about the goal. We worry about when we will reach, where we will reach. In the process, we do not notice how we are traveling. We miss the beauty of the path.

When we torture ourselves with worrying about quarterly results, how can we enjoy work? If we do not enjoy work and work becomes a chore and a torture, how can we perform? How can results be achieved?

On the other hand, whatever needs to happen will happen if we stop worrying about the carrot or the goal, and enjoy what we do. When we enjoy our path, we will enjoy our work. Whatever destination we reach will be the right destination.

That is why people who are successful are passionate about what they do. They do not care what happens in the end as long as what they do is enjoyable. If we are passionate about what we do, we will enjoy what we do. Whatever we do will be wonderful and successful.

However, as long as we struggle, we suffer even if we make money. The goal that we are chasing will be a mirage, an illusion. As soon as we reach that goal, we will be forced to chase another goal. We will not have a minute to pause, to rest and enjoy what we have achieved. Acquisition becomes the goal, not enjoyment.

We can never be happy in *rajas*. It drives us like a donkey until we are exhausted and we collapse. We need to decide whether or not this is the way we want to live. Ask: Do I wish to be a donkey driven by a carrot dangling in front of me all my life? When we decide, 'No, this is not what I want,' it is time to break away from *rajas* and move towards bliss.

Q: Swamiji, how can society exist without rules? There will be anarchy. If everyone does what he or she feels like, how can others survive?

This is the argument society uses in order to make rules. Who is an anarchist? A person who does not abide by rules laid down by society is an anarchist. One who opposes the blind rules that are laid down with no effort in communicating their understanding is an anarchist.

All great spiritual masters have been anarchists. They never accepted the rules of society. They broke away from their conditioning and efforts to condition them. The expression of their liberation was to help others reach that experience. Yet when these masters left their bodies, the experience behind these expressions was eventually forgotten and the expressions became dogma. Society and religion used them as dogma to make rules and regulations.

Anarchy is an expression of freedom. It is living in and with Nature. We think it means the end of the world. Why?

Rules and regulations create bondage. They create restrictions based on fear or greed. One way or another, they bind you. These rules and regulations are employed by society and institutions created by society to control you, to keep you in line.

There are two ways to maintain harmony and peace. One is to create awareness and make everyone feel that they are part of a whole. The other way is to create rules and regulations for proper behavior and establish a system of punishments and rewards based on fear and greed to persuade them to fall in line.

The *vedic* era and truly civilized cultures followed the first path of creating awareness, that of *satva*. Over time we lost patience to instill that awareness into people. Society fast-forwarded into *rajas*, into aggression. It created rules and regulations and commandments. We descended further into collective *tamas*, the collective unconscious. Even rules and regulations do not work anymore.

We forgot the reasons behind the rules and regulations. The spirit was lost. Only the blind implementation of the structure remains. What remains is fear and greed, and therefore guilt and suffering. We need to break away from this bondage and move into freedom.

This is why awareness needs to happen. With awareness you do not need rules and regulations. You do not need to be controlled. You are free. And that is what society fears. Society fears that you will no longer fear. That is the only hold society has on you. If you want to be part of society as it is set up now, you will have fear. When you decide to break free out of awareness, you are in eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.



The Depression of Success

14.13 O son of Kuru, when there is an increase in the mode of ignorance, Madness, illusion, inertia and darkness are manifested.

14.14 When one dies in the mode of goodness, He goes where the realized souls are.

14.15 When one dies in the mode of passion, he takes birth among those engaged in activities.

When he dies in the mode of ignorance, he takes birth in the space of the ignorant.

14.16 By acting in the mode of goodness, one becomes purified.

Work done in the mode of passion result in distress, and actions performed in the mode of ignorance result in foolishness.

14.17 From the mode of goodness, real knowledge develops; from the mode of passion, greed develops;

From the mode of ignorance develops foolishness, madness and illusion.

We act like a wind-up toy when we are steeped in *rajas*, and like a battery-operated toy with a dead battery when we are in *tamas*. Krishna uses powerful words to drive home how desperate that state is: ignorance, madness, illusion, inertia and darkness.

It is surprising how quickly one can slip from *rajas* to *tamas*. To slip from restless activity into inactivity and inertia is simple. Activity without meaning, activity with tension and stress and activity totally focused on sensual satisfaction quickly leads

to deep fatigue. The activity without any meaning that we find in *tamas* is not the same as activity without a purpose and goal that we experience in *satva*. Please do not confuse the two.

I mentioned earlier that the real danger of *rajas* is that we are constantly focused on a goal and we forget to enjoy the path as we pursue a meaningless purpose. Life has no purpose. It only has meaning. The meaning of life is to be aware, to be conscious, and to realize our inner divinity. That is why I say that I am here not to prove my divinity, but to prove your divinity.

To be divine and to realize that inner divinity is our true meaning in life. Anything less than that is meaningless. Being aggressive, being restlessly active, or being constantly on the move does not help us understand or realize this meaning. We will be running after one thing or another. We are just plain greedy. Ramana Maharshi says that a mustard seed looks like a mountain when we want it desperately; however, even a mountain becomes insignificant like a mustard seed once we achieve it.

If we are driven by mere possessive obsession, we are bound to become tired sooner or later. Aggression results in deep depression. This is what I call the 'depression of success'. I see this often in countries like the USA. People struggle to increase their material wealth, disregarding everything else. People change cars every year, houses every third year and their spouses every fifth year!

People run after material possessions and trophies without knowing why. One day when they have acquired and reacquired so many things and still feel unhappy, uneasy and listless, they wonder why they acquired the things that they struggled for. They go into deep depression, what we call *tamas*.

In poor countries like India, people have little and are desperate to acquire minimal comforts. Just to have three meals a day, wear footwear or go to school is a great luxury for many. For those who miss out on essentials, their suffering arises out of the depression of failure. That is relatively easy to cure. All they need is some success and they are happy.

The depression of success is more difficult to address. To experience failure when we have been always successful and we have worked so hard is difficult to accept. What results then is depression, *tamas*.

Tamas is generally born out of the ignorance of our true self. This is the original sin. The original sin of Adam and Eve was not listening to the snake or having sex, rather, it was the lack of understanding of their own inner divinity.

Sometimes *tamas* can arise out of an effort to move out of that ignorance. A highly *rajasic* person, one who has been aggressively pursuing material gains, when moving into a spiritual path can easily move into *tamas* for a while. I see this in our ashram. When a person accustomed to restless and meaningless activity is becoming centered, the body-mind system initially rejects activity and sinks deep into inactivity, into *tamas*.

People literally sleep day and night, not wanting to do anything. However, this does not last long. The negativities get worked out and they settle into a *satvic* mode of meaningful activity, which does not pursue goals.

I talked about corporate and business people exemplifying *rajas* earlier. There are corporate and political leaders who can get into deep *tamas*. They get into dangerously mad and deluded behavior. All dictators who caused suffering on this planet, from Genghis Khan and Aurangzeb to Hitler, were not merely *rajasic*, they were dangerously *tamasic* as well. They were filled with ignorance, delusion, madness and darkness even though they may not have been inactive.

Many corporate and professional people tell me how they are driven by fear. In discussing *rajas*, I talked about being driven by greed and motivation. The stick drives many donkeys. Either they do not respond to carrots or the drivers believe that the stick works better. So many corporate leaders drive people through fear. They find it the ideal weapon because they themselves are filled with fear. They are insecure people. They are driven by *tamas*. *Tamas* creates *tamas*.

The only way to deal with such people is to face them. Fear disappears when faced. It is like our shadow. When we turn around, we do not see the shadow. Insecure leaders derive their energy from our fear. When we stand up and face them, they have no energy to face us. It is the same with the fear of spirit and ghosts. Our fear and belief that they can harm us gives them power to hurt and harm us. Once we face them, they run away.

Tamas is darkness. It is negative. We can only remove darkness by bringing in light. In the same way, we dispel ignorance by bringing in awareness. The *Upaniṣad* says *tamaso mā jyotirgamaya* meaning, let my darkness be removed by light.

Let the light and wisdom of Krishna, the *Jagatguru*, dispel your darkness and *tamas*.

In these verses, Krishna tells us where the person goes after death when steeped in these attributes of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. A *satvic* person becomes divine. A *tamasic* person chooses a lower life. A *rajasic* person continues to suffer due to greed.

In another verse in the Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna that a person is reborn based on the last thought before death. Here Krishna explains how that last thought is not an accident. It is based on one's *guṇa*, nature.

People tell me, 'Oh *Swamiji*, why should we worry about spiritual stuff now? This is the time to enjoy. When we get old, we can think about spirituality. After all, Krishna declared that our last thought redeems us. All we have to say is Ram or Krishna as we take our last breath.'

If only it were that easy, then all of us would never be reborn! If throughout life you run after money and material possessions, do you think your last thought will be about anything other than money? If throughout life you were obsessed with wine, women and song, only those thoughts fill your mind when you die.

The *saṁskāras* that have driven us throughout our lives have etched deep grooves into our mind space. The attitude with which we have lived not only follows us at death, it follows us after death as well. This is the mental setup, the conditioning, the *vāsana* with which we led life and with which we leave our life as well. When we are reborn, our spirit finds another body to occupy. This same mindset, same *vāsana*, reappears in the form of *prārabdha karma*, unfulfilled desires of our past life. These become the basis of our conditioning in this life. They are our seed *saṁskāras*.

In our second level program, the Nithyananda Spurana Program (NSP), the LBP 2, we study *saṁskāras* in great detail. In one sense, the NSP takes us through a death experience. This program, now conducted by teachers personally trained and ordained by me, deals with the seven energy layers surrounding the body. The spirit passes through these seven layers at death and relives the experiences that you went through in life.

In another sense, LBP 2 is about dissolution of our conditioning. Many superficial and deep *saṁskāras* will be burnt out during the meditations participants go through in this program. Therefore, symbolically, I gave them the option to take a new spiritual name at the end of LBP 2, signifying a rebirth. This program allows everyone to glimpse the ultimate Truth. What keeps us separated from this truth is our conditioning, our *saṁskāras*.

People who complete the LBP 2 don't harbor enmity against others who have wronged them in the past. They become less judgmental and their approach is no longer negative. Their entire attitude towards others changes as a result of the inner experience of de-conditioning and the dissolution of *saṁskāras*.

How we live life now determines how we will be reborn. There is enough scientifically validated evidence to prove that we are reborn. Whether we are a Christian or Muslim, whether or not our religion allows us to believe in reincarnation, a trained psychologist or psychiatrist can take us into past life regression. While I don't fully agree with how this process is carried out, there is no doubt it is real. People benefit if it is carried out properly.

When our belief system allows us the option of rebirth, life is less stressful. We do not live or die once. We live and die, again and again. Therefore, Eastern religions that allow us the luxury of belief in rebirth are more tolerant of our own self and others. We are allowed to enjoy our path. We may wander here and there. Eventually we hope that we will arrive at the truth.

Heaven and hell are not as stark in Eastern religions that believe in rebirth. They are flexible concepts, not rigid. On the contrary, in religions that deny rebirth, hell and heaven are eternal. We burn forever in hell if we don't do well this life. So life becomes driven by fear and greed.

In reality, there is no hell or heaven. These are just in our mind. They have been force-fed into our mind, conditioned into our system by our religious beliefs for the purpose of controlling us.

We live in hell when we live a totally material life, focused upon ourselves, to the exclusion of everyone else. We constantly fear others, feel jealous of others, express anger towards others and are never happy. No matter how much wealth we accumulate, we suffer. We may be rich, but we are in hell. Heaven and hell are mind spaces that we occupy in this life, not locations we visit when we die.

Krishna says that a person living in *satva* goes to higher spaces, the abodes of the realized sages. He becomes divine. When we are steeped in *satva*, we live in awareness. We live in the present moment. We are no longer attached. We are no longer obsessed with the results of our action and we are no longer controlled by fear and greed. We stop thinking about ourselves and we start living for others. It is no longer me and me alone, but me and you, and eventually just you that includes me as well. All transactions become unconditional.

The present state is eternal. That is the state of the higher planets, of the heaven that one talks about. We can be in heaven even when we are alive. When our spirit moves beyond the body, it has the potential to move beyond its *saṃskāras*, the conditioning, into its true potential of self-realization.

When one is in *tamas*, in deep ignorance and darkness, one sinks lower in rebirth. Krishna says such a person is reborn as an animal. The lowest energy center of a human being is the *mūlādhāra cakra*, the root center at the base of the spine which is the sex center. And this is the highest center at which animal energy operates. All animals operate out of pure survival instinct. Their nature is conditioned for that. There is nothing wrong or inferior about that. That is their nature.

Human beings are provided with intelligence to move upward in consciousness. We have the freedom to make mistakes and we do make mistakes. When Krishna talks about being reborn in ignorance and as animals, it is not to denigrate animals. He means, a human being who behaves instinctively, out of a blocked *mūlādhāra cakra*, and out of an animalistic nature, is ignorant of his potential as a human.

We are not human beings striving for a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings enjoying a human experience. That is the truth.

We can be in this state only when we are in *satva*. When we are in *tamas*, we forget our spiritual nature. When we are in *rajas*, we have a vague idea; however, even that spiritual experience becomes an attachment, another goal and desire. We become attached to something that is beyond attachment. Krishna says that we are reborn into this human form, back into this cycle of life and death, this cycle of *samsara*, with all its suffering.

It is our choice to be instinctive and unconscious, in deep *tamas*, like an animal, or to be logical and chasing objects out of *rajas*. The third choice is to be beyond attachments, in a superconscious state, in an intuitive state, in tune with our sublime *satva* nature. This choice determines our next birth. In fact, it determines whether we will even be born again.

Krishna, the master psychologist is right on the mark: Purification and knowledge from *satva*, distress and greed from *rajas*, and foolishness, madness and illusion from *tamas*!

Let us start with madness, illusion and delusion. That is where most people are. The great philosopher and poet saint from India, Adi Shankaracharya says that life as we lead it is *māyā*, illusion. *Māyā* is that which is not real, yet appears real. We cannot argue with someone and prove that life as we experience it is not real as it seems. We act in all possible ways that give us the feeling that this life is real, permanent. We talk, walk, cry, laugh, and do everything else to prove this. So how can all this not be permanent?

With modern technology, we can create dolls that do all this. We can put on goggles, headphones, sit on a wired chair and experience 4D reality. They can release smells to add to our mood. If we open our mouth, they will pop something in our mouth also. We can have a virtual experience that excites our five senses.

Virtual life including virtual sex is not in the realm of science fiction any more. It is an illusion. We argue that it is for frustrated individuals who have no access to the 'real' stuff, whatever that means.

What is 'normal' and what is not? To Shankara, the life that we lead is not normal. To us, virtual life may not be normal. To someone who is fully satisfied with virtual life, that is normal. What is fantasy to one is reality to another.

In the 1970s, when the hippy culture ruled, a few well-known teachers advocated hallucinatory drugs to induce spiritual experiences. Marijuana, LSD, exotic cacti, multicolored mushrooms and other substances were recommended to make people experience the 'bliss' that one could not experience through meditation. Instant *nirvāna*, it was called. The problem was that even if those drugs simulated the pineal gland functionalities and released dopamine, they were in no way spiritual. It is true that in some spiritual experiences, dopamine release has been documented. Yet the logic does not work in reverse. Dopamine release does not prove a spiritual experience. It is an imitation.

That which we experience in the present is real. The present moment is the only real moment. The present moment is eternal. Neither the past nor the future can be eternal. They are not real since neither exists in the *now*. They don't have a positive existence in the present moment. We can't reach out and hold the past or future in our hands. They are just thoughts that occupy us *in* the present moment. If we feel that we are happy now, but we become depressed one hour later, we cannot be in bliss or eternal happiness. That is not bliss. That is temporary pleasure.

Many drugs, simulated experiences and fantasies can put us into that the realm of temporary pleasure. The simple scale of measure to know that this is no good is: We will need more and more of those inputs to stay happy. We will feel less and less happy even with more and more of what we think gives us happiness. This is how dangerously drugs work. That is how people become addicted. The heroin or cocaine user needs more and more of it to make them feel 'happy'. Finally they stop working. The user overdoses and dies. That is the vicious cycle of *tamas*.

We can daydream and feel happy while we daydream. What happens when we stop daydreaming? Life is as bleak as it was before. If life were interesting, we would have been immersed in it. Then why would we daydream? Our fantasies are

like that. We look at the picture of a movie star and we want to have that movie star or be like that movie star.

The first impulse, the first fantasy, arises out of lust. People know for sure that it is a fantasy, but it feels good while they have that fantasy. They wallow in it like a buffalo in mud. At least the buffalo is in the present; it is not in fantasy. Once people realize that they are wasting time, that they are degrading themselves with such fantasies, they must regain awareness and regain control of their life. Otherwise their whole life will be a madhouse.

The second impulse, wanting to be like the movie star, is probably more dangerous. It is born out of envy, comparison and is a pure waste of energies. This is *rajas*. It is no longer *tamas*. These people aren't satisfied with themselves, with their body or their mind and want to be someone else. Today they imitate this actor or actress. What happens when that actor or actress becomes less popular or old? Worse still, what happens when they meet that person in real life and find that they themselves are better looking than the actor or actress? After all, movies are the ultimate in fantasy. Everything and everybody is made-up.

This is what Krishna means by greed, envy and jealousy that ends in anger, fear, guilt and a hundred other negative emotions. We are either in attachment or aversion. We are either driven towards or away from something or some condition. We are goaded by greed or tortured by fear. Whichever it is, we suffer. This suffering results in distress, depression and loss of self-esteem. We have lost our center.

Our center is our true nature. Our true nature is divine. We are one with the universal energy, God, *Parāśakti* or whatever we want to call it. We cannot describe it. We can just experience it. We experience bliss when our focus is in that central core and not out at the edges of our personality.

Throughout life we run away from that center, that core of bliss. Our senses lead us towards the periphery where material objects are. Our inner core is empty: it is *śūnya*. But it is also *pūrṇa*, complete by itself with nothing else needed to top off the bliss. However, the outer periphery is forever changing. Nothing is eternal about it. Even when objects are the same, our perceptions keep changing. This periphery is *māyā*, illusion and *tamas*, ignorance.

Our *rajasic* nature, the restless activity that strives to introduce purpose into something that is essentially without purpose, keeps driving us away from the center into this peripheral darkness of *tamas* and *māyā*. *Rajas* always drives us into *tamas*. Aggression, passion, attachment and aversion eventually take us into delusion and ignorance.

But from time to time we get that spark of intelligence that says life does not need to be this way. There is more meaning to life than fantasies. We start searching. When we seek our true nature, we move towards our center, the core of bliss. Then something in the external space attracts us and we move out to the periphery. We keep moving in and out, from center to periphery, from periphery back to center.

That is why I call human beings eccentric! They can neither be in the center nor in the periphery. They settle in between and keep oscillating. They are eccentric. They are neither in complete madness nor centered in their divine consciousness.

The movement towards our core, our true self, is driven by *satva*. The movement outwards is driven by *rajas*. When we are fully settled in the periphery, we are caught in *tamas*. We are no longer human. When we settle into the center, we go beyond the three *guṇas*. We become the *triguṇa rahita*, the divine one who is beyond the three attributes.

Q: What Krishna says can be accepted if one believes in rebirth. What about those whose religious beliefs do not allow them to believe in rebirth?

In the Gita, Krishna does not speak to Hindus alone. This universal master, does not exclude other religious believers. He speaks spiritual truth, universal truth.

First of all, we should be careful not to reduce these truths to facts. *Satva* means I will be reborn as God, *rajas* means I will be reborn a human and *tamas* means I will be reborn an animal. These are metaphorical truths, not scientific facts. Krishna says that the tendency, the *vāsana*, which is an outcome of your *guṇa*, your nature, gets carried forward. You can be divine or animal in the human body. You do not have to sprout wings or become a pig.

Secondly, religions that deny rebirth do not follow the teachings of their founding masters. They reinterpret the spiritual teachings of the founders to exercise control.

All religious organizations promote hell and heaven so that they can earn money. When I lead devotees to the Himalayan Mountains every year, we visit sacred shrines at Kedarnath and Badrinath. They allow me into the inner sanctum. The priests do not like it because it spoils their income. I tell the people, 'Please give money to the poor who line the streets; most of these priests only grab money in the name of God.'

These priests charge people 10,000 rupees (200 USD), not a small sum in India, to offer a cow to the temple in order to redeem the person's ancestors. They start the worship process and then ask you to pay. If you don't pay, they curse you. They tell you that your ancestors will go to hell, you will go to hell and your children will go to hell. You can stop this by paying 200 USD. The main thing here is that it is a virtual cow, not even a real cow! Even if they show you a cow, be assured that the same cow is offered a thousand times behind your back! These people understand corporate accounting better than Wall Street specialists!

Religions exercise control because people fear death. Some are afraid of the pain, but mostly they fear what lies beyond. They are afraid because they do not know what lies ahead. They feel comforted when someone tells them that if you do this, you will go to a happy place, and if you do that, you will go to an unhappy place. They have no clue as to where they will finally go. However, they have this deep-rooted need to believe. And their religion becomes the only way.



Where Do We Go from Here?

14.18 Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planes;

those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets;

and those in the mode of ignorance go down to the worlds below.

14.19 When we see that there is nothing beyond these modes of nature in all activities and that the supreme Lord is transcendental to all these modes, then we can know My spiritual nature.

14.20 When the embodied being is able to transcend these three modes,

he can become free from birth, death, old age and their distresses and can enjoy nectar even in this life.

Krishna provides the key to liberation here. Those who go beyond the three *guṇas*, beyond the activity-producing attributes, become free of bondages and enjoy bliss in this world. This is the assurance of the master. This is a guarantee.

These words are a great technique. Step one is when we realize that each of our activities arises from one of the three *guṇas*: *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Step two is the understanding about which *guṇa* it is and exactly what that *guṇa* is doing to us. Step three is to move out of that *guṇa* into the *satva guṇa*. Finally we transcend *satva guṇa* and enter into *nirguṇa* or 'no *guṇa* state'.

Whatever we are doing, whatever is happening to us, we need to become aware of the attribute, the *guṇa* that is driving us. If it is a fantasy, we work out of *tamas*. If it is fear and greed, we work out of *rajas*. And if we are unattached and undisturbed by all that is happening around us, we act out of *satva*.

Many psychological systems are offered as solutions to relationship problems. In one of these, people are supposed to act out of one of three modes: adult, child or parent. The adult is nonjudgmental, the parent is critical and the child is defensive. The training teaches which role we act out of most of the time and shifts us into the adult frame that is considered to be the right role.

In theory this is a reasonable system and takes into account the influence of conditioning upon us. If brought up by critical parents, one remains a child all one's life. One would constantly look for appreciation, or at the least, a lack of criticism. Just because some people express in the critical parental fashion doesn't mean they are being good parents at that time. In fact, their parent mask hides the defensive child in them. The control freak aspect of being a parent is a powerful response to being controlled as a child. So one becomes a 'parent' part of the time, trying to control those that they can control. At other times, one becomes a defensive child.

Moving out of either role requires de-conditioning from *saṁskāras*, the embedded memories in our unconscious. This is difficult to do at the conscious level and dangerous to do at the unconscious level. It needs to be done at the superconscious level through meditative practices such as we have in our NSP courses.

What do I mean by this? We have talked about the *saṁskāras* that are engraved memories buried in our unconscious. They drive us through one of these attributes (*guṇas*). We think and act out of one attribute or a mixture of attributes. These thoughts and actions when repeated again and again furrow the *saṁskāras*, or its subtler mindset, *vāsanās*, deep into our psyche. Conscious, logical and analytical procedures cannot easily identify them, let alone remove or repair them. That is why so-called catharsis processes that aim to rid us of negative emotions give only temporary relief. The basic negativity remains buried.

Unconscious, or what is mistakenly called subconscious processes, can open up and reveal the *saṁskāras*. However, after that, we have no control over the process. It is a Pandora's box, and once opened, what happens is out of our control. Processes such as creative visualization, hypnotic regression and self-hypnotic suggestions can be extremely dangerous. It is not that they do not work; they do. However, we have no control over what happens. This is why the proverb: Be careful of what you wish for, you may get it; and who knows, you may regret it.

We get more than what we bargained for. It is like the customer who walks into a restaurant and orders everything on the menu. When he is about to walk out, they give him the bill. Can he justify that he did not order the bill? When we

order the food, we ought to know we will get the bill. Yet in the case of unconscious processes, we do not think about the bill. We go on ordering. When the bill comes, we are in for a deep, unpleasant experience.

A few people I know even used these processes and even taught them to others. They did not understand why these processes were dangerous until they went through a few meditation programs. Then they realised how dangerous these are. They knew bad experiences had resulted, yet did not know why. When we discussed these cases, they understood what had happened.

Visualizing consciously or unconsciously does not take us out of *rajas* and *tamas*. We can be dragged deeper into the fantasyland of *tamas*. The only way to move into *satva* and dissolve *saṁskāras* is to move into a superconscious state through meditation. There is no other way that we can achieve it ourselves. Superconscious visualization carried out in a systematic way can dissolve *saṁskāras*, the engraved memories, and burn out our *vāsanās*, the mindset that is developed through these *saṁskāras*. It is the only way. All other techniques do only one thing; they make money for those who promote them and put those who are seeking help into deeper trouble.

So first become aware of your thoughts and actions. Identify which *guṇa* they come from. If it is a fantasy, rooted in *tamas*, drop the fantasy and move into the present reality. The problem that you face is that fantasies are more interesting than the way you lead your lives! That is why you prefer to stay in fantasy and out of touch with reality. You need to realize that you are operating out of sheer ignorance and that this will not help you in any way. This realization and awareness that will help you move out of the zone of fantasies, can only come as a result of meditation, which leads to self-awareness.

Similarly, we are driven by *rajas* when we run after something that attracts us or run away from something that disturbs us. We need to realize that this is a vicious cycle: this cycle of attachment and aversion, of greed and fear. More and more of what we desire will give us less and less happiness. Unless we turn and face what we are afraid of, the fear remains rooted. Again, meditation is the key. It leads to the awareness of this vicious cycle and helps us stay detached.

Through repeated practice of meditation techniques, we can burn out our *saṁskāras* and shift out of the *guṇas* that we are currently rooted in. We can move into a state of non-attachment by dropping the emotional load of our memories. We can be cleansed of negativities and unblock and energize our *cakras* through meditation. That is the key.

In our first level meditation programs, called Ananda Spurana Program in India and LBP or Life Bliss Program - Level 1 overseas, we teach meditation techniques to energize the seven *cakras*, our energy centers. The first session focuses on the heart center, *anāhata cakra*. The meditation used for *anāhata cakra*, the *Mahāmantra meditation*, is an extremely powerful meditation. When practiced regularly, this meditation helps us radiate unconditional love through the energized *anāhata*.

Whenever anyone interacts with us and we interact with others, it is from one of the energy centers. Each *cakra* has its emotional basis, which is either blocked or energized depending on its level of awakening. The *anāhata* is blocked when we go around seeking attention from others in the name of love. Most of the time we desperately seek attention from others. We are unhappy when we don't get approval from others. When the *anāhata* is energized, we radiate love unconditionally. We are no longer dependent on others to approve us. We do not need a smile from someone to make our day. We have our reservoir of smiles to sustain us and to give others as well to enhance their lives.

Irrespective of which emotional state someone approaches us with, whether anger, greed, fear, worry, attention-need, jealousy, ego or discontentment, respond with an open *anāhata*. Respond with unconditional love. That is all we need to do. We will soon find others responding to us from their *anāhata*.

This is not easy at first. It is especially difficult with those whom we really love, ones we are close to. It is easy to put on a mask and a smile and pretend to radiate love to those whom we hardly know. It is easy to love the world since the world does not have a face. It is difficult to love our neighbor who has a face. It is more difficult to open up unconditionally to our spouse. Yet that is where the payoff is.

Our *mūlādhāra cakra*, the root center, is all about survival instincts. It is the root of all our fantasies, our *tamas*. Greed, lust, anger and guilt arise from a blocked *mūlādhāra*. When the *mūlādhāra* is energized and unblocked, we move out of *tamas*. We move into reality. When someone approaches us from a blocked *mūlādhāra*, it is with greed, anger or lust. We can still respond with unconditional love from our *anāhata*.

When the *svādīṣṭhāna cakra* is blocked, it is the root of all our fears and insecurities. The *maṇipūra cakra* is the seat of worries and stress. *Anāhata* is blocked by attention-need, the desperate need for approval. The *viśuddhi cakra* is blocked by jealousy, the *ājñā cakra* is blocked by ego and the *sahasrāra cakra* is blocked by discontentment. We can recognize which energy center is blocked in the

other person the moment they approach us. But irrespective of which emotion they approach us with, we have the choice to respond with our awakened *anāhata*!

Someone in the Hollywood film industry told me that all movie plots are based upon one of these *cakra* emotional blocks. It is not merely our real life that is affected, even our fantasy life revolves around the *cakras*! To understand the *cakras* and their emotional blocks is to understand our *guṇas*. And to understand our *guṇas* is to find the way and open the door to bliss.

Q: How do we develop spiritually? You said we are eccentric, that we try to keep moving inwards and are dragged outwards. What is the way to keep going inwards?

This question is important. This realization that you need to go inwards and that you have a problem when you move outwards is enough to keep you going inwards. The sheer awareness that the outward journey will not fulfill you and that it will only mire you in ignorance and drag you into depression will keep you moving towards the center.

We can talk about how the move to the center can be accelerated via techniques; but this is unnecessary. The realization to move to the center is more important. The grace, guidance and influence of a master will make the journey effective. The journey of a disciple is the safest possible journey to the center.

Man is born as a seed. The fragrance is there, although it is hidden, unmanifest. The seed must grow and become a tree. The seed must wait for spring, the awakening. One day, suddenly the seed becomes a tree and flowers, and the fragrance is released.

To be a disciple means that you are falling as a seed into the soil of the master. You are dissolving yourself in the soil. To be a disciple requires enough trust so that one is ready to die. The seed must die before it can grow into a tree. So the first need is trust in the master, trust in Existence.

The second need is to continuously grow in every possible way. People remain stuck. They go so far and think, 'This is the end. There could be no more to life.' There is no end; life is an eternal pilgrimage. The deeper you go into it, the more you will encounter mysteries. The more you know, the more you will be wonderstruck. Much more has to be known. It is an unending process.

So the second thing to remember is: Keep growing. Grow in love, bliss, and in meditation. Grow in all possible ways - in sensitivity, awareness and creativity.

The third thing is the waiting. Impatience is a hindrance. Make every effort to grow; however, let the expansion and flowering happen in its own time. Nothing happens before the right time and one never knows when the right time will come. Wait for the spring. Flowers cannot be forced to come out of the trees. They come when they come. Spiritual flowering is not a process that can be forced. It requires patience.

If these three things are fulfilled, the day when your fragrance will be released is not far away.

Let this sink deep into the heart; this is fundamental to spiritual progress. Once we feel that God cares for us, our anxieties disappear and anguish simply dissolves. The deeper we feel God's love, the more and more open we become. Fear makes us closed; love makes us open. God's love means that the whole of Existence loves you: the sun, moon, stars, trees, and people. From all directions love is showered upon you.

Entering into the path is a divine decision. It is not yours. It is God's. There is an ancient saying: Before a man decides to seek God, God has already decided to seek him. Without His decision, our decisions are impotent.

Only when He decides, our decisions have power enough to become fulfilled. Our decisions are always wavering, always divided. Our decision is at the most a majority decision, a parliamentary decision. However, that which is in the minority may become the majority tomorrow; and that which is in the majority today may not be in the majority tomorrow. Our decisions are unreliable; they are not total.

When God decides in our innermost core, the decision and commitment are total. The involvement is irrevocable. We cannot go back. The decision is bigger than us. It possesses us and we become overwhelmed by it. Only then is true discipleship born. Without God deciding for us, our decisions are of little value.

Remember that this is God's decision on your behalf. You are a medium, a vehicle for His decision to be fulfilled in life. Then things will start happening with such intensity, depth, and speed, that one remains constantly in surprise at what is happening and why it is happening, because we don't feel ourselves worthy enough and yet it happens anyway.

Blissful effort is needed for growth. Ordinary effort won't do. It must be blissful. The moment effort becomes blissful it is almost effortless. It is effortless

effort when it is blissful. When it is not blissful, it is a strain. And one can enter into the world of God only in a deep, restful mood. Hence, the seeker must fulfill a paradox. He must make efforts, certainly; he must be industrious. But his effort must be a special kind of effort. It must be effortless. There should be no strain or tension in it. It should be more like play than work.

One should enjoy it. One should not do it like a duty. One should make it a joy unto itself, as if one is unconcerned about the result. The result comes whenever we are ripe. There is no need to think about it.

It comes of its own accord. Existence is fair and just. It gives what you deserve. There is not a moment's delay. If you don't deserve it, it doesn't happen no matter how much effort you make.

Right effort is effort that is not an effort. It is joy, play, love and bliss. Then miracles start happening. We are entitled to miracles, yet we never fulfill the basic condition. This is the basic condition. Then miracles are as ordinary as everything else.

The master appearing is a summons. It is God calling you. It is good that you heard it!

Seeking is a call from God. And everybody is called! Sufis say that if one hundred people are called, only ten hear the call. Ninety never hear it. Only ten percent act and respond. Ninety percent never respond. That's why there are so few people whose existence can become a proof of God. So few people are full of the light and perfume that is beyond this worldly life.

All beauty is rooted in the truth. Without truth, beauty is false. Unless it is part of the truth, it is a dream, a fantasy or a projection. The poet lives in dreams. His vision of beauty is not that of truth. He creates his beauty. He is inventive. The seer does not create the truth. The truth cannot be created. We can only discover it. It is already there. But the moment we discover truth, great beauty explodes within and without. The experience of truth makes us beautiful and transforms the whole experience into splendor.

That is the difference between the poet and the seer. The poet dreams about beauty. The seer experiences it. The poet remains far, far away. He speaks about beauty; however, it is only *about* beauty. The seer speaks beauty; it is not *about* beauty. He talks the truth. And truth is beautiful and good.

Meditation is a way to discover truth. Then beauty is discovered automatically. Beauty follows truth like a shadow.

Existence can be lived in two ways: as prose or as poetry. These are the two possible approaches. We can live it as logic. Then it is prose. Or we can live it as love. Then it is poetry. We can live it as mathematics. Then it is prose. We can live it as magic. Then it is poetry. Only if we live life as poetry, do we discover God.

You cannot realize God with logic. And without God, there is no meaning or significance in life. Life becomes a burden. One lives because one must live. One lives because it doesn't feel right to commit suicide. One lives because one cannot gather courage to commit suicide.

One drags. One does not really live. One slowly dies because there isn't any thrill in the heart without poetry. There are no adventures. All is mundane. Nothing is sacred. Temples disappear from our life. There are only shopping malls. The bank balance and power and prestige are there but something in the deepest core of our being remains unfulfilled and empty. Life becomes a wound that becomes bigger and bigger everyday.

We want to drown it in work, constant worry, alcohol, shopping or sex. We want to drown the memory and feeling that something is missing. Yet we cannot drown it. It keeps knocking on our door and haunting us. It is something so essential that it must be fulfilled.

Carl Jung, the famous psychiatrist used to say, 'In my whole life's practice I have observed that the patients who came to me after their fortieth year were not in need of psychological treatment. They needed some sort of religion. They needed some sort of meaning in their life.'

However, psychology cannot provide meaning. It can provide a certain adjustment to society, but society itself is neurotic. To be adjusted to society is to be neurotic. It is to be acceptably mad. Einstein has said that a genius is one who has escaped society's conditionings. This is the truth!

Psychology can help us accept the drudgery of life, the routine and the dullness. However, it cannot help us transform it. Jung's insight is correct. In Eastern scriptures, the need for spirituality arises at age forty-two. Just as at fourteen, the need for sex arises, at forty-two the need for spirituality arises. If it is not fulfilled, we feel uprooted. It can only be fulfilled by spirituality.

There is no need to argue for spirituality. For example, we don't argue for music: either we like it or not. Nobody can prove the beauty of music to anyone. Similarly, you either like a rose or not. The rose appears either beautiful or not. Just because the rose isn't beautiful to someone doesn't mean the rose loses something.

But by denying the need for spirituality, a person loses a great chance to be in communion with nature, with God and their own divinity.

Ordinarily man is a slave to his unconscious instincts, a slave of his biology, a slave of his mind: it is a multi-dimensional slavery. This whole slavery must be destroyed from the roots. Only then will the consciousness rise in all its beauty and glory, in all its light and fragrance.

All the awakened ones followed the path of meditation. When you meditate, you are watchful. By being watchful, the territory of the unconscious, *tamas*, is reduced everyday. The more conscious we become, lesser the territory of our being that is in the unconscious zone, and lesser the *tamas*. One day when we are one hundred per cent conscious, the unconsciousness will disappear. And with that disappearance, biological, physiological and psychological slavery will disappear. All kinds of slavery exist in the unconscious. By cutting the unconscious, we cut the very root. The key to self-mastery is meditation.



Going Beyond the *Guṇas*

14.21 Arjuna inquired: O my Lord, by what symptoms is one known who is transcendental to those modes? What is his behavior? And how does he transcend the modes of nature?

14.22,23,24,25 The Blessed Lord said: He who does not hate illumination, attachment and delusion when they are present, nor longs for them when they disappear; who is seated like one unconcerned, being situated beyond these material reactions of the modes of nature, who remains firm, knowing that the modes alone are active;

He who regards alike pleasure and pain, and looks on a lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye; who is wise and holds praise and blame to be the same; who is unchanged in honor and dishonor, who treats friend and foe alike, who has abandoned all result-based undertakings - such a man is said to have transcended the modes of nature.

With great clarity the master tells us what to do. He uses specific terms that cannot be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Krishna explains the nature of one who has transcended the three *guṇas*, one who has gone beyond his natural attributes. He explains what we need to do to become a *triguṇa rahita*, to become liberated from the influence of the three *guṇas*.

One who is beyond the three *guṇas* is unaffected by their play. He is beyond the play of emotions. Whatever happens is right for him. Success and failure mean the same. Friend and foe make no difference. Poverty or richness has no influence.

Such an attitude of total detachment requires one thing: complete trust. When we trust that whatever happens is what needs to happen and we accept whatever happens as it arises, we are totally detached. Then whatever happens will be right. Such trust can only come from surrender.

I tell my disciples that because I have no home, every home that I visit is my home. Anywhere and everywhere I stay, whether it is under a tree or out in the open, is my home. Four walls, a door and a lock do not create a home for me. People ask why I wear jewelry or different kind of clothing. What difference does it make? This body itself is not mine. This skin is not mine. What difference would it make if I wore this or that?

There is neither attraction nor aversion. Just as people admire the clothes or accessories on a mannequin, I admire the clothes and jewelery on this body. They have no connection to me.

Every movement I make is at the order of Existence. I cannot move a finger without the permission of that universal energy. Usually when people talk about God, it is a concept to them, a theory to prove or disprove. For enlightened beings, it is reality; it is the reality of their existence every moment. When people look at themselves, the 'I', the identity, drives them. For enlightened beings, that identity is not real. 'I' does not exist.

When we are one with Existence, one with nature, nothing affects us. I walked tens of thousands of miles barefoot across the length and breadth of India. People ask, 'How is it your feet are so soft, not calloused and broken as ours would be if we walked barefoot even ten miles?' I tell you: If we trust nature, nature looks after us.

When I lived in Tapovan at approximately 17,000 feet in the Himalayan Mountains above the source of the sacred river Ganga, I wore only this two-piece clothing even in freezing winter. When we trust nature, cold and heat do not bother us. There are documentaries recorded by scientists showing how Tibetan Lamas pass an initiation test. They wrap themselves in wet clothes and sit in the freezing snow. They pass their test if they are able to dry their wet clothing by the heat generated through their meditation! They use meditation techniques to accomplish this; however, that is only part of the reason. The major reason is their trust in nature.

Pain and pleasure are part of our conditioning. During my *parivrājaka* (monastic wandering) days, I happened to visit a village in Central India. I came across a strange characteristic in the lives of women there: painless delivery of babies. The women used to enter huts specially built for that purpose. There were no cries and no shrieks. They went in alone, needed no help and simply came out smiling with a baby. I was surprised! When I asked an elder how it was that they had no pain and did not need a doctor or midwife, he did not understand my question. 'Pain?' he asked, 'What pain? Why should women feel pain at childbirth? It is a celebration!'

We create pain and pleasure through association, through conditioning. We create greed and fear through association. Our *saṁskāras*, our conditioned memories, create pain and pleasure.

Light and darkness, good and bad, right and wrong are based on conditioning. Our conditioning, the civilized education and refinement tells us that a person dressed in a particular manner is acceptable in society and another dressed differently is not. When such a statement is made by a global figure, such as Churchill calling Gandhi a 'half-naked fakir', many people take exception. But most people go by it and behave the same way. We may not say it as strongly or as impolitely as Churchill, but we start discriminating based on our upbringing. Otherwise we would not have a system of the untouchables in India. This has nothing to do with religion or *vedic* culture. No scripture ever said one person is inferior to another. All scriptures affirm that every human being is a spiritual being; all of us carry the seed of divinity in us.

So how can anyone quote scriptures to justify the unfair treatment of another person? When Krishna says, *Vasudaiva kuṭumbha*, 'Let the world be your family,' there is no exclusion, none at all. When He says all, He means ALL!

Our conditioning, our upbringing, should be called 'down-bringing' since it drags us down and does not raise us up. Our conditioning inculcates these negativities in us. This is how society ensures its survival through controlling us with fear and greed.

Our NSP meditations are designed to dissolve our conditioning, our embedded memories. At the end of the four-day course in India (which is a two-day course overseas), people prostrate at each other's feet with no differentiation of age, gender, wealth or class. Their negativities disappear and, at that heightened energy level, all that one can see is the divinity in others. I have seen fathers-in-law prostrate at the feet of their daughters-in-law, something nobody would believe in the context of Indian culture!

Q: You always speak of ānanda, bliss; you also talk about the state of grace. Are they the same?

Bliss is an inner phenomenon. Grace is its outer expression. Bliss is the flower. Grace is the perfume. Bliss is the experience. Grace is the expression.

Grace can only be blissful. It cannot be sad or serious. It can only be cheerful and laughing. Bliss cannot be anything other than graceful. It can't be ugly. It has tremendous beauty. It is the spirit of beauty. They are two sides of the same coin.

People ordinarily think of bliss as a peak, never as a valley, but bliss has both sides. No peak can exist without a valley. No valley can exist without a peak. They are one phenomenon, inseparable. One must learn to be blissful in both situations. When you are on the sunlit peak, it is easy to be blissful. The altitude, silence, sun, open sky and the freedom of that openness helps to make you blissful. You are far away from the world and its problems and anxieties. But you cannot live on the peak; you must come back to the valley.

The peak can only be a holiday. One cannot exist there longer than that; hence one must learn how to be blissful in the valley, in the turmoil of the world, in the darkness, in the dismal world of the valley, in the struggle, competition and in all that the valley contains. One must learn to be silent and blissful even when the situation is just not conducive to it, when in fact, the situation is against it.

Unless you can be blissful in a situation that ordinarily creates misery, you are not a blissful person yet. Unless you can be in heaven even in hell, you have not arrived home. Much more still needs to be done.

There is an ancient parable:

An enlightened master arrives at the gate of heaven and he is asked, 'Where would you like to go?' He immediately says, 'To hell.'

The gatekeeper is puzzled and confused. He says, 'You are the first person in millions of years who has asked to go to hell. Are you crazy? Why do you want to go to hell?'

The master said, 'I know that I can be in heaven anywhere. Heaven is in my heart. I have lived in the world. I was always in heaven. I have not lived in hell. Send me anywhere and I will still be in heaven. Wherever I am, heaven is there.'

This is a true, authentic achievement. Otherwise, you only live cheerfully and blissfully when the situation permits, allows, helps and nourishes you.

Live in the world, in the valley, with a song in your heart. Live in the valleys of the world but remain unaffected, untouched and uncontaminated by all that exists there. It is possible. It is the greatest miracle and joy when it happens because then you have transcended all outer situations. And transcendence is the ultimate goal of seekers.

Bliss is also love and love is another name for life, another name for Existence, another name for God. The more the understanding grows, the higher love soars. Love moves higher on the wings of understanding, on the wings of awareness and meditation.

Love plus meditation equals the true seeker's path. Make your love more and more meditative, wherever it is, and meditation will take it upwards.

A small story:

Two beggars lived in a forest. One man had no legs and the other man had no eyes. One day a great fire broke out. The man without the legs could see; however, he could not move. He could see how to escape, but he could not escape. The other man could move, but he was unable to escape without seeing where to go.

Both men would have died if they had tried to escape on their own. They joined together. The blind man took the other beggar on his shoulders. Collectively, they had two eyes and two legs.

That's exactly the situation of man: without love you don't have energy to move. Without meditation you don't have a vision or any insight. With love plus meditation, you have both: you have energy to soar and you know where, how and when to go.

Our bodies die. However, we are neither born nor can we die. We are eternal. To know this is to be free from fear. It cannot be just a belief. Millions of people believe that they are immortal. But they believe out of fear. They fear death. They want to be immortal. Hence they believe in it. But they don't know, and the fear and doubt persist deep down inside. At the moment of death, belief won't help them. Doubt will explode. They will die in doubt, and to die in doubt is to miss the whole point. So it is not a question of belief. It must be an understanding.

Meditation is the way to know it. It opens the doors of eternity, timelessness. In the beginning of our meditation practice, time disappears for a few moments. Then we experience more and more of 'time disappearing'. One day suddenly we are surprised: Hours have passed; yet it is as if the inner clock has stopped. There is no time movement inside. When we can transcend time, we have transcended death. Time brings death. It is time that brings birth.

There is a Sanskrit word for both time and death: *kāla*. Going beyond time is to go beyond death. This is a great understanding. Meditation leads us beyond time.

Let it become our experience. We don't need to believe. There are enough believers in the world. We need people who know. These are the people who will be the harbingers of a new humanity. These are the people with understanding. They don't believe in God. They understand and *know* God.

Bliss is a phenomenon that cannot be hidden. It is fire. It is flame. We cannot hide it. Bliss shines forth. It is impossible to hide it.

Secret traditions advise people to 'hide it'. This is because if our bliss is known in some cultures, countries or traditions, we will be in danger. These cultures killed people because they were joyous. These people, in their utter joy and divine madness, they said things that opposed the religious interpretation of the scriptures. They went against tradition and conformity.

In great joy a Sufi master declared, 'I am God.' He wanted to share it. His master warned him to keep his mouth shut and not to utter a word. This man promised, yet moments came when he would shout, 'I am God.' And not only would he shout, his whole being would shout. Each fiber of his body would shout! He was so full of light. He was killed, murdered.

Miserable people cannot tolerate a blissful person. It hurts to see somebody blissful. It creates jealousy. It hurts their ego. So Sufis learned to hide it. So have others. Ultimately it is impossible to hide it. Bliss is a luminous phenomenon.

Misery is dark; bliss is bright. Misery is a light unmanifest, a candle unlit; bliss is a candle lit. How can we hide it? It is impossible. Of course we have not yet created a society that loves these masters without judgment. We have not been able to create a society that appreciates blissful people. However, even if we lose our life letting our whole being declare the ultimate Truth and joy of Existence, it is worth it.

Man looks small. He is not. He is like a small seed that can grow into a big tree. And a single seed can fill the whole earth with greenery. A single seed contains infinity. Like that, man is a seed of divine love and that seed can become a vast continent. And unless it does, we are never contented. Unless we become pure love with no desire to gain anything except the joy of sharing, we are unfulfilled. Only by becoming total and absolute love, does life come to its ultimate peak. That peak is called God, paradise, and *nirvāṇa*.

We must grow towards more and more love. No other prayer is needed, no other scripture is needed and no other discipline is needed. Love is more than any scripture or discipline. It brings its own order; it turns our chaos into a cosmos.

Trust in love because love is the foundation of all transformation. Love is the innermost core of alchemy. Love makes us content. People live in discontentment. To live in discontentment is to live in complaints, grumbling and always asking for more and more. To live a discontented life means to live in desire, and desires are unquenchable. One's life becomes a long tragedy. It is a long series of failures and frustrations, a desert where nothing grows and nothing flowers.

Man can live in desire or in no-desire. Seeking means starting and it is a path of no-desire. Seeking means, whatever is, is more than enough. One is thankful for whatever *is*. One does not ask for more. On the contrary, one is grateful because so much has been given. When we see what has already been given to us, we are surprised.

So much has been given, unasked. Feel grateful for it. That is the way of contentment. Contentment is being thankful towards Existence and in that thankfulness much more keeps coming to us. It is a paradox of life, that when we desire, nothing happens except frustration and when we don't desire, everything happens and we become entitled to miracles!

Remember that this single word 'contentment' contains the whole of spirituality. It comes out of wisdom. Contentment does not come out of knowledge. It comes out of knowing and experiencing. It is not based upon other authorities. It is rooted in our own vision and direct experience.

Knowledge is cheap. We can collect as much as we want of it. All we need is a good memory. This is not difficult. Memory can be trained and made more skillful. However memory will not transform us. It has its use in day-to-day affairs and in scientific work. Yet it is useless as far as our subjectivity is concerned.

The inner journey needs to be without any burden of knowledge. One must go inwards like an innocent child. The less we know the better. If we don't know anything, that's the best. That's what Socrates says, 'I know only one thing: I know nothing.'

The moment one turns in, is the turning point. That is the moment one becomes wise. That is the moment one starts experiencing life. Otherwise words, theories, and philosophies go on interpreting life for us and don't allow us direct, immediate contact with life. They are not bridges. They are walls.

Innocence is the bridge and when innocence blooms it is wisdom. The ultimate wisdom is bliss and its expression is grace. Then a man becomes a child again. Then the circle is complete, the circle is perfect. This is the perfection of life. If we die knowledgeable, we miss the point; the circle is incomplete. We will be born again to complete it. When we die in bliss, we die in grace, never to return.



Expression Of The Divine

*14.26 One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of **Brahman**.*

*14.27 And I am the basis of impersonal **Brahman**, which is the rightful state of ultimate happiness, and which is immortal, imperishable and eternal.*

Krishna concludes the chapter by saying that the transcendental state beyond the three attributes of nature, the *guṇas*, is *Brahman*, the ultimate cosmic consciousness. He says you reach this through devotion. He says that He is that *Brahman*, the Source of eternal bliss.

Krishna speaks as *Parabrahma* Krishna, the supreme energy and not as Vasudeva Krishna, the individual. He is in the expanded consciousness of *Brahman*, and beyond the three *guṇas*. He is the Source of the *guṇas*.

What is the difference between *Parabrahma* Krishna (ultimate consciousness) and Vasudeva Krishna (the physical person, the son of Vasudeva)? In the case of an ordinary human being, even though he has the potential of divinity, he has not realized it. So he is different. That is the difference between you and an enlightened master. Both of you are divine to the same extent. Yet you are unaware of your divinity, whereas the enlightened master is fully aware of it.

In the case of Krishna, he is the master. Why then the difference? The difference is not to do with Him. It is to do with us. The frequency of *Parabrahma* Krishna is not visible to and approachable by mortals. That is why Arjuna had to be given the divine vision to perceive *Parabrahma rūpa* or *viśvarūpa*, the cosmic form of Krishna. Even Arjuna, His closest mortal friend, His mirror as the human, could not perceive Him in that cosmic form until he was permitted.

In order for humans to perceive Him and interact with Him, *Parabrahma* Krishna must become Vasudeva Krishna. To a certain extent He must subject Himself to the play of the *guṇas*.

When an enlightened being has merged with the universal energy and incarnates in human form, that incarnation must have some *guṇa* injected into it. Let us use an analogy here. We cannot make jewelry out of gold when it is completely pure, of 24-carat purity. We must add some impurity such as copper to reduce it to 22 or 18 carat. Then we can make jewelry out of it. Similarly when an enlightened being enters planet earth he must be infused with some *satva guṇa* in order to take human form. Within some time, this *satva guṇa* also disappears, leaving the being beyond the three *guṇas* and once again in an enlightened state.

Each enlightened master is unique in his expression of his experience as the Divine. Some express experiences and some don't. Our scriptures say that if two enlightened masters say the same thing, one is a fake! Each master is unique in his or her expression. The experience is the same, yet the expression is different.

Krishna is different from Buddha and Christ. Each has the same theme of compassion, yet the way the compassion is expressed is different. Buddha expressed it as contemplation and Krishna in joyous abandon. So we choose a master based upon how we vibrate to his expression. If our path is devotion, we gravitate to Krishna; He is lovable. If we are the meditative type, we go to Shiva, the master who taught in silence.

It does not matter who our master is. What matters is our faith, trust and the attitude of surrender. Our master can be an unenlightened being. If we trust him, we can become enlightened, even though he may not be. What matters more is our attitude and approach, our *guṇa*, and not the master's state. Even if we worship a stone and surrender to it, imagining it to be our ultimate savior, we will be liberated. It is true.

The faith and the surrender help us transcend the nature of all activities. We surrender the result of our actions to that master, whomsoever he may be, whomsoever it may be. We do everything contemplating that master and surrender it all at his feet. That attitude alone liberates us. This is what Krishna means by devotion. Nothing more is needed. Krishna is not talking about the flute-playing, yellow-robed Krishna. Anyone that we surrender to totally is Krishna and we then fall into Krishna consciousness.

Let us pray to *Parabrahma* Krishna, the universal consciousness, the ultimate energy, to give us all this understanding in our life, to make us experience the truth that He teaches and to establish us in and make us radiate eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

Q: You referred to biological evidence that links our behavior with our cellular formation. Can you please elaborate this point?

Modern science knows there is constant regeneration of cells within our body-mind system. We die everyday. Our body-mind system is estimated to have over 60 trillion cells. Billions of cells die everyday and new cells are born. This process goes on as long as we live. Within two years or so, all the cells in our body get replaced by new cells. This means that every two years we are completely reborn.

Since this is a scientifically established fact, why is it that the miseries of our old cells get carried into the new cells? Why do our diseases continue after the cells die? What is the connecting link? Science does not have an answer. Yet interesting experiments show the path.

Let us say that you take a blood sample and you separate out some cells. From those cells, you extracted the DNA and keep it outside your body. Experiments have shown that when you react with emotions and release hormones, the DNA in the dish that is separate from your body releases the same hormones. If you become angry and release adrenalin inside you, the DNA outside releases the same adrenalin. If you become fearful, your DNA that is outside releases the same fear hormones. These dishes with the DNA were placed a few miles away and the same results happened.

In another set of experiments, scientists exposed the DNA samples to various emotions. I have spoken elsewhere about Dr. Masaru Emoto's book, *The Hidden Messages from Water*. This Japanese scientist showed that water samples showed significant change in their molecular structure when exposed to different types of human emotions. These experiments are also shown in the movie, *'What the Bleep Do We Know?'*

Here, DNA samples were exposed to emotions. Scientists found that positive emotions made the DNA grow and negative emotions made it shrink. When treated with love, even the DNA of people affected with HIV and cancer showed improvement and resistance to further deterioration.

Another set of experiments involved fundamental light particles called photons. A photon placed in a vacuum chamber tended to move around randomly. When a DNA sample was introduced into that chamber, the photon started revolving around the DNA. It was as if this elemental particle detected another element of higher consciousness and obeyed it by rotating around it, in the same manner as planets rotate around the sun.

Even stranger was that when the DNA sample was removed from the vacuum chamber, the photon continued to rotate in the same orbit that it followed when the DNA was inside the chamber. It was as if the energy of the DNA stayed on even though the DNA was physically removed.

Scientists are taking baby steps in understanding what the *vedic* scriptures established five thousand years ago. The *Vedas* speak about the energy field that is imperishable even when matter is destroyed. They describe the mindset as an energy form that continues across death into a new body. They explain how this energy influences our behavior beyond time and space.

Saṁskāras or these engraved memories, are energy. They can be positive or negative energy. As long as the *saṁskāras* continue, they influence the material nature of the body-mind system. Even if the cells die and new cells are born, as long as the energy of the old cells is not transformed, the new cells will be influenced and affected. Cancers and ailments continue.

This is why we place so much emphasis in training you to understand *saṁskāras* and in teaching techniques that help dissolve *saṁskāras* in our Life Bliss Programs. You may think it is a tall claim, but these techniques transform your very DNA. They transform the energy behind your genes so that new cells are no longer affected by the negativities of the old cells.

*Thus ends the fourteenth chapter named **Guṇatraya Vibhāga Yogaḥ** of the **Upaniṣad** of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.*

BhagavadGita

No Questions, Only Doubts

CHAPTER 15

When we question, we reveal our arrogance and aggression. When we doubt, we exhibit our ignorance and seek clarity.



- ◆ You say that Arjuna has fallen silent. You imply Arjuna still has doubts. How does one differentiate whether one has doubts or questions? If we suppress doubts thinking they are questions, won't it create more confusion?
- ◆ We have been told that charitable activity is good. I am confused when you say charity is not always good. Please explain.
- ◆ You say that your use of the term 'ego' is synonymous to Freud's usage but not the same. Please explain.
- ◆ Can Near-Death-Experiences lead to enlightenment?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you say conditioning makes us do what we do. Isn't there a built-in programming of the human body-mind system that dictates what we do?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you talked about the importance of ashram communities in spiritual development. What about people who cannot live in such communities? Can they progress?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you talked about yoga. Modern people practice yoga as a form of exercise for wellness. Is this wrong?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you have explained so well about how the mind works. How can we use this in our daily activities?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, if we are interconnected at the level of the mind and higher levels, why don't we feel this connection? How do we get connected?



No Questions, Only Doubts

Only Krishna speaks in Chapter 15 of Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna does not utter a word. Arjuna's inner chatter has been silenced. As a result, his questions have disappeared.

Krishna expounds upon who He is and what He is. This chapter is traditionally titled *Puruṣottama Yoga*, yoga of the supreme Self. Krishna unveils the reasons why He is *Puruṣottama*, supreme amongst Beings and explains that what He has imparted to Arjuna is the most profound secret. Krishna is convinced that Arjuna is ready to receive the Truth.

Arjuna has settled into his Self. His confusions have disappeared; questions have dissolved due to his cosmic experience in *Viśvarūpa Darśana Yoga* - having the Vision of Krishna's cosmic form - and his direct spiritual experience. He has achieved the depth of knowledge and clear understanding required to internalize whatever Krishna has taught him so far. He has achieved the intensity of spiritual experience. He is a new being.

With the revelation of Krishna's cosmic form, Arjuna has awareness of his own part in the collective consciousness. This experience has put him in a devotional mood. This devotion is not merely towards Krishna, but through Krishna, to all of humanity. Arjuna speaks and listens on behalf of humanity and not for himself.

Arjuna doesn't have any more intellectual questions. He has reached a point where he is totally ready to receive Krishna. He has moved forward from a state of thoughtfulness, where he is confused and full of questions, to a no-thought state, a no-mind state where questions disappear.

As long as we have questions, we will not receive the answer. Questions are about defending our prejudice and defending our limited understanding. Questions act as a barrier between knowledge and us, between the master and us. All great masters, including Buddha and Lao Tse, had an aversion to questions.

Masters convey their experience. It is an energy transmission that occurs. To convey an experience in words denies the experience. Once verbalized, the experience loses meaning. Lao Tse says, 'If it is really truth that was experienced, it cannot be communicated. If it can be communicated, it is not the truth.'

A Tamil saint once said, 'That which is known cannot be communicated; that which is communicated is not known.'

Krishna is different. He is engaged in a dialogue with Arjuna for the benefit of mankind to resolve those conflicts and doubts that arise in all humans. As the super-conscious Godhead, He takes responsibility of resolving Arjuna's confusion.

Arjuna's questions arose out of confusion. As a warrior, a *kṣatriya*, Arjuna was accustomed to killing. His confusion on that battlefield of *Kurukṣetra* was not about killing per se; rather it was about killing kinsmen, teachers and friends. Arjuna's confusion did not arise from a principle of non-violence; if it had, it is doubtful that Krishna would have persuaded him to fight.

Arjuna's confusion, depression, doubts and questions arose from his ego, his feeling of 'I' and 'mine'. The warriors assembled in front of him, those men whom he had to fight and kill or be killed by were kith and kin. They were not strangers. It was possessiveness, not non-violence that created confusion in Arjuna's mind.

Arjuna's illusion caused confusion. His view that these warriors assembled in front of him were relatives, teachers and friends meant that he had no societal right to kill them. As a warrior, Arjuna had no qualms or moral issues about killing people. Therefore, the violence of his ego, the violence born out of possession acted as a barrier; it was not a moral principle of non-violence.

One at a time, Krishna answered Arjuna's questions. The power of a master is such that an answer to one question effectively silences many others that would have normally followed. Arjuna's inner chatter slows down and almost completely stops at the point of his divine visionary experience of the cosmic form of Krishna described in Chapter 11.

What remains with Arjuna are not questions that he has for himself, but doubts that he would like to clear on behalf of mankind. These questions now have a completely different focus. They do not pertain to what he should do or not do. After seeing Krishna's cosmic form, his questions are about the nature of the divine Krishna and how to approach Him. Krishna now explains to Arjuna what He is and how to reach Him. Krishna is convinced that Arjuna is through with his intellectual questions. What remain are only doubts.

Doubt means a person is ready to digest the master, receive the master, and imbibe the master. Whatever word comes out of the master clears doubt. Doubt makes the master express himself. Questions make the master close himself. Almost all questions are violence.

Words can be categorized into two streams. One stream consists of questions, another of doubts. A question means violence; it is arrogance to express that we know something or to defend what we know as truth. Most of the time we ask questions to show that we know something. People often ask me big questions.

A person asked me, '*Swamiji*, the Brahma Sutra says *Brahman* is beyond comprehension. He is beyond understanding and beyond intellect. Is that right?'

The purpose of this statement is to show that he has read Brahma Sutra. This is not a question. There is no quest in it.

Doubt without quest is question. Question with quest is doubt. Questions do not seek truth; doubts do.

Man cannot handle too much truth. He can handle half-truths. Beyond that, truth starts transforming him. He feels that the ground he is standing on is slipping away. None of us wants to know the truth. If truth is given honestly, only a few will be willing to listen. People become frightened the moment honest truths are given. Truth frightens them. So, they question the truth.

One western philosopher wrote beautifully, 'Please don't take lies away; let man live on them, live with them.'

To have one's lies taken away is too much to bear. These lies are the fundamentals upon which one lives. Lies are the basis upon which we are living and dying. Lies comfort us; truth threatens us.

Why do we wear makeup, dye our hair and dress up? We do not want to see the truth, to face the fact that we have become old. We cannot accept the truth of our ageing; we pretend, fantasize and lie. Why do we dress up in a colorful way, when we know that we are hiding the true Self within ourselves? We know that we are not what we show ourselves to be.

We hide the truth in numerous ways. Why do we have so many social courtesies? We respect each other. For social courtesies, we do many formalities. We are taught from childhood to say 'please' and 'thank you,' irrespective of whether we mean it, irrespective of whether the situation demands it, rather because social etiquette says so. Whenever we meet someone, we say 'It's nice to meet you,' even though we may not feel so nice!

Even I am sometimes forced to play this game. When people initially meet me, when they do not know me well, it is best for me to be socially polite to them. Otherwise they get hurt. They are not ready to face the truth. Whatever words they might express to me, their mind is not ready to accept the truth. It will be too harsh. So I offer them brain candy. Why disturb them from their socially comfortable situation when they are not yet ready?

If we really feel 'nice,' our whole body, our being shows it. Must we say 'It's nice to meet you,' for the other person to understand that we are happy to meet him? Our whole body language, our smile, our sheer pleasure at meeting that person makes that obvious. We don't need to use words.

The more civilized a country or people believe themselves to be, the less they express the truth of their feelings naturally. When someone smiles, the smile comes from the lips. It is plastic. The smile never touches the eyes. The eyes never smile, nor does the heart. Laughter emanates from and stops at the mouth. Understand: True laughter comes from the belly. But when a person truly laughs with the feeling coming from his stomach, people stare as if he is guilty of misconduct, guilty of expressing the truth of his feelings. Laughter also disturbs people, just like truth.

We know that the truth is something else. We dare not face the truth. We feel that we cannot afford to be truthful in verbal language as well as body language. The truth straightaway gives us enlightenment. It transforms us.

The moment someone honestly imbibes or catches a single point of truth or a single dimension of truth, it does wonders.

Vivekananda says beautifully, 'Even if you memorize each book in all the libraries of the world, it will not help you except to increase your ego about the bookish knowledge you acquire. Take one idea and imbibe it in your being, experience it. Your life will be transformed by a single idea, just one idea!'

A book from Tamilnadu, South India describes the life of sixty-three enlightened masters. The name of this Tamil book is Periapuranam, meaning 'Great Epic'.

If we study this book, we find masters who apparently haven't done anything worthwhile, nothing at all. Nothing happened in their lives. Some masters just picked flowers and offered them to God, nothing else. Yet, they achieved enlightenment. What we do is unimportant. How honest we are with our action matters. When they offered flowers, they were true and honest to the action.

We may also offer flowers everyday and do everything to please God, yet we aren't enlightened. We only incur an added expense of maintaining a garden or

buying flowers! The problem is, we are not honest. When these masters pick flowers to offer to God, they continuously think about the deity to whom they are offering the flowers. They are totally devoted to the thought of the deity. Nothing distracts them.

When we pick flowers to offer to a favorite deity, we think of something else, somebody else. I have seen people do rituals regularly. But their thoughts are on office work or something else in their life.

I have observed people daily chanting the Vishnu Sahasranama and Lalitha Sahasranama that contain 1000 names of the gods and goddesses, as a ritual. They are proud that they do not eat a morsel until they finish the chanting, which if done completely may take more than an hour. Soon after these people start chanting, they look to see which verse number they have reached! They are desperate to see how many verses remain to complete the chanting. They are bored, tired. It is a chore that they are engaged in.

When our heart is not in it, worship becomes a chore. When our heart is in it, even hard work becomes joyful worship.

These people cannot focus on the chanting or the spirit of the prayer. They don't have the honesty. These enlightened masters did not chant or pray out of fear or greed, or as a ritual; they wanted to do it. They had an urge to do it. They did this out of their Being, from the depths of their hearts, in love and in tune with nature, with God.

If we scan our day from the moment we get out of bed until the end of the day, it is filled with lies. Our smiles are false. When we smile, we don't want the other person to know what is in our mind; so we don't look into each other's eyes. Why? We fear that the other person will read our mind. We can present a big smile on our lips when our heart boils; however, in our eyes, we cannot hide anything.

Nothing can be hidden in our eyes. Eyes are the doorway to the soul. Straightaway we see the being in another person's eyes. We don't look into someone's eyes because we often say and do something that we do not want them to know.

A great philosopher and professor attended a few of my discourses. He asked me, 'Swamiji, for a fifteen minute lecture I must prepare for at least an hour, even if I have been teaching the same subject for years. I notice that you give discourses everyday with no preparation. And each day the discourse is on a new subject!'

‘I know you do not prepare because you are busy; you have no time. I have seen that you do not prepare for the speeches. Yet how can you speak continuously? I need hours of preparation.’

The answer is this: If what you are expressing is your honest experience, there is no need for preparation.

Just open up, whatever comes out is your experience. For example, if someone asks our name, do we prepare? Do we need to carry clues for that? Of course not! It’s our experience. If something has not become our experience, we need to prepare to deliver a lecture. If we must prepare to deliver a lecture, or if we fear public speaking, this means we are filled with lies. Our whole being is a lie; our life is a lie.

Why do people fear public speaking? We fear that we may speak what we think. We fear that whatever is going on inside might spill out. We know that there is so much dirt inside that something might erupt, some garbage might tumble out and we are scared. That is why we prepare what and how we speak.

We must be certain that we don’t speak something else; we need to remember the points one by one. If we forget, we are afraid that we may say something that is really in our mind. Preparation is done to ensure that we don’t say something else. Preparation is nothing but trying to hide our true inner chatter.

If a professional speaker must prepare all his talks, whatever he says is a lie. It has not become his experience. It has not become a part of his being, it has not been internalized as a part of his being. It has just been memorized and delivered.

Why do we prepare so many courteous words? We say, ‘Nice to meet you, it feels so nice to be around you.’ After a while we say, ‘I need to go; I must take care of some work.’ Why say such things? If we really feel nice, our whole being will show it. Joy will be expressed by our body language. We need not verbalize it.

A small story:

A teacher takes a guest on a tour of the school. Students pass by and greet her. The teacher nods her head curtly and mutters under her breath, ‘Same to you.’ The guest asks, ‘Why do you never wish them back? Why do you say, ‘Same to you?’

The teacher smiles and says, 'I have been a student myself and I know what is really going on in their minds.'

So, whenever you greet someone, be aware of your thoughts underneath your greeting. Be a little aware! Many times we need to edit when and what we speak. However, if we are established in the truth, our inner chatter will disappear. Our thinking will disappear. If we are completely truthful, we never need to think, we just need to speak and relax. Why do we need to continuously think?

Not only for public speaking or discourses, even when we meet friends or we are with our spouse, we plan and rehearse words. We rehearse how we will start, what we will begin with and how we will continue the topic. We do a full dress rehearsal. If the other person starts talking on a different topic, we are lost; we have no idea what to say. We have done a complete rehearsal only of what we know and want to talk about.

If we need to be prepared in order to speak to our boss that is okay. We must be courteous; otherwise we may lose our job. That is at least a basic need and part of the social game. Let us accept it, forget about it and move on. But the situation is much worse than that. We continuously prepare dialogues for friends and family. If we must always prepare, whatever we prepare is a lie. Even if we say it as if it is a fact, it is not the truth. Stating a fact is not being truthful.

We can state facts with many connotations and most of it will be lies. A lie can be dressed up with a little cosmetic alteration to look like truth.

In the Mahabharata, there is a revealing incident. Drona was the General of the Kauravas, the clan of a hundred brothers who battled their cousins, the five Pandava brothers. Krishna, the divine incarnation of Lord Vishnu, helped the Pandavas and planned to destabilize Drona so that he could be killed.

Krishna knew that Drona could not be killed unless his mind was disturbed. And unless Drona was out of the way, the Kaurava army that he led could not be defeated. The only way to upset Drona was to kill his son.

Drona's entire energy was focused on his son Ashwatthama. Krishna wanted someone to tell Drona that his son was dead. Drona was not attached to anyone except his son and Krishna knew that this was the only way he could upset Drona in order to kill him.

Krishna was also aware that Drona would not believe just anyone who said that his son had been killed. Krishna knew that Yudhishtira, the Pandava prince, would

be the best person to announce Ashwatthama's death. Yudhishtira was known to be perfectly truthful; he would never lie. Everyone believed and trusted him.

Krishna asked Yudhishtira to tell Drona that his son Ashwatthama was dead. Yudhishtira refused and said that he could not lie. He said, 'Ashwatthama is alive; how can I say he is dead?'

Krishna said, 'That's okay, there is an elephant named Ashwatthama. Bheema, your brother, will kill this elephant. You say, 'Ashwatthama, the elephant, is dead.' When you say the word 'elephant,' I will blow my conch to drown out your words. This will take care of your not lying and get the job done.'

Yudhishtira agreed since he was only going to be stating a fact. He said, 'Ashwatthama, the elephant, has fallen and he is dead.' When he said the word 'elephant,' Krishna blew the conch. Blowing a conch signifies victory.

Drona believed Yudhishtira and fell into deep depression. He lost all his energy, laid down his arms and entered meditation. A Pandava warrior then killed Drona, who refused to offer a fight.

The death of a son is painful. When a son dies, a part of the being dies. It was too much to handle, even for Drona. This is how Krishna had Drona killed, which then led to the defeat of the Kauravas.

In this incident, though Yudhishtira wasn't lying, though he was being factual, he was not truthful either. There is a clear distinction between being truthful and being factual. Everything factual is not truthful.

Though Yudhishtira, who was also known as Dharmaraja, the King of righteousness, did not lie, he did not speak the actual truth. The next part of the story goes as follows.

It is said that Dharmaraja usually walked above the earth; he was free from its bondage because of his truthful nature, and even his chariot never touched the ground. Now, this is not a literal truth.

Please understand that when someone is in ecstasy and bliss, he feels light, as if he is flying. Physically Dharmaraja walked on the ground, however he felt so light it was as if he was flying above the earth. It was a feeling of total boundary-less consciousness.

The moment he made the statement about Ashwatthama's death, even though it was a fact, he came down to earth. His chariot that had been flying above the

ground touched the ground. He lost his boundary-less consciousness and touched the earth. Truth was lost. His honesty was lost.

In real life, why do we lie so much? Why does a husband always tell his wife that he loves her? If he loves her, his body language should show that. But when he verbalises it, he actually reminds himself. He must remind himself that he is supposed to love her. When we speak too many words, we are lying. We are not speaking the truth. We are covering a lie with a lot of decorations.

Speaking the truth is dangerous. If we speak the truth, we have space among enlightened people but not other folks. It is so dangerous.

Truth endures logical questions and arguments. It withstands the test of logical analysis. If someone needs to verify whether something is pure gold, we must put it in acid to test it. An acid test is required to test the truth of gold. In the same manner, if we wish to know whether something is pure truth, we must put it to an acid test of logical analysis. Our logic will simply fall and fail.

When our logic falls before it, you can be sure it's the truth. Anything that is truth destroys our logic; it means that our logic will become so tired that it will fall by itself. If it is the ultimate Truth, it must stand the test of logical analysis. It must withstand all the logical acid tests that it is put through.

If the disciple is in the questioning mood, the master must prove his words. He must be prepared to go through the acid tests demanded by the questioning disciple. It is a big load.

If the disciple is in doubt, the master will open up with the truth. He will not cover the truth with words. He will not play with words. The naked truth will be told directly. Any truth can be served and explained to a mind with doubt. To a questioning mind, nothing can be explained.

The disciple's mood decides whether the master's words will be advice or a powerful transformational technique. If the disciple is completely tuned, the master can help him. The master need not even be enlightened.

A small story:

A scholar lived on the banks of the Yamuna river. Daily he offered ritual worship to Krishna. A milkmaid brought milk for the scholar on a regular basis. One day, she did not come because it had rained heavily the previous night and the river had flooded.

The following day when she arrived at the scholar's home, he asked, 'Why didn't you bring my milk yesterday?' She replied, 'The river was flooded and I was unable to cross it.'

The scholar told her, 'Many have crossed the *saṁsāra sāgara* (ocean of worldly life) by chanting Krishna's name. Yet you can't cross a small river. Chant His name and cross!'

Like a typical scholar, he showed off his dry knowledge to impress the poor milkmaid while simultaneously scolding her for missing a day of service. The milkmaid received his words as absolute truth. From that day onwards, the milkmaid was on time.

Sometime later, the river flooded again. The milkmaid shocked the scholar by arriving at the usual hour. He asked her, 'How did you manage to cross the river?'

The milkmaid replied, 'Due to your guidance, master. I chanted Krishna's name and walked upon the water as you told me.'

The scholar could not digest it. He demanded proof. The milkmaid agreed. They went down to the riverbank. The milkmaid chanted Krishna's name and walked upon the water. She just floated and crossed the river.

The scholar could not believe what was happening. He thought, 'If an ignorant milkmaid can walk on water based on my teachings, why can't I, a great scholar?'

He started chanting Krishna's name. However, as he approached the water, he lifted his waistcloth so as not to wet it. He stepped into the water and sank.

He didn't actually have any belief in what he told the milkmaid. He just spoke those words to show off his knowledge.

But if the disciple is in a receptive mood, even casual words of the master can be techniques for his growth; it will benefit him. Even if the master is unenlightened or if the master has no belief or experience of his own words, the disciple's belief surmounts any obstacle.

Doubt and faith are two sides of the same coin. We cannot have faith without doubt. That is why, however much people wish to believe my words, they have doubts. I tell them it is okay to have doubts. They are going through a process, a cycle of faith and doubt. As doubt is cleared, a greater faith develops. Then, the

next level of doubt occurs. A new layer of understanding is revealed and faith is restored.

Ultimately, the disciple, the devotee, transcends doubt and faith. He reaches the truth. Until such time, it is normal to have recurring doubt and faith.

Now, Arjuna has come to an understanding. Because of his firsthand spiritual experience, he has come to the level of doubt. No more questions. He does not ask what is beneficial for him. Those self-serving calculations have gone. No more questions like *kim tad brahma kimadhyātmam kim karma puruṣottama* (Ch.8, verse 1). (What is *Brahman*? Which is duty? etc)

He was playing with words then. Now everything has disappeared. In the first chapter, Krishna was totally silent. Arjuna spoke at length. He quoted on righteousness and from ancient scriptures. In this chapter, Arjuna is completely silent.

This is a problem faced by every master descending on planet earth. An innocent disciple is better than an ignorant disciple.

A small story:

A man approached a music teacher and asked, 'Master, I have studied music for four years. Now I want to learn from you. How long will it take?'

Master replied, 'It may take six years.'

Another guy came and asked, 'I have studied music for two years. How long it will take for me to learn?'

The master said, 'Two years.'

A third guy came, 'Master, I know nothing about music. How long must I spend to learn music?'

The master replied, 'No time. You can pick it up from me in no time at all.'

A fresh, innocent disciple immediately imbibes the master. He just picks up from the master. He directly absorbs the master into his own being. However, for those with partial knowledge, the master must do something to undo what they have learned.

All masters descending on planet earth bring the same *śāstra*, the knowledge that is written down. But they also bring the life that is infused in this knowledge.

What we read in books are just words. They never bring transformation for the reader. No book can give us the truth. They are not designed for that.

A small incident:

Ramakrishna Paramahansa dictated a book while a disciple took notes. At one point, the disciple asked, 'Master, please repeat that.' The master repeated the statement.

The disciple stopped writing and said, 'Master, this statement contradicts your statement in the previous chapter. This is confusing.'

Ramakrishna told him, 'Don't worry. Write down what I dictate.'

The disciple was unconvinced. Ramakrishna explained, 'The purpose of the book is not to present facts, but to state the truth and bring about transformation. It is to inspire people to move towards a living master.'

The master's words are not related to facts; they are truth. Facts record; truth resonates.

This is true regarding all scriptures and books. No book can give the ultimate Truth. The problem is that some people take books as the ultimate authority. They take their intellect as authority. Instead of living the truth, they take books as authority. They demand proof for the masters' words based on books and scriptures they have read.

The main problem is the meaning of words. For example, if a master utters the word '*ātman*,' he says it from the Sanskrit dictionary. But we look for '*ātman*' in our own Oxford dictionary! Naturally the problem starts.

When we are in the presence of a living master, we can seek clarification. We can immediately clear doubts. A master knows by seeing our faces that we are unable to understand. He explains further till things fit together.

When we read books we are playing with our mind. That is why many feel more comfortable with books than listening to a living master. This is the difference between real seekers and pseudo seekers.

If our search is real, if it is an urge, we will be seeking a living master. On the other hand, if our search is an entertainment, just passing time, we feel comfortable with books and old masters' photographs.

If our search is intense, we feel deeply connected with a living master.

Sukha Brahma, the great sage and young son of Vyasa, author of Mahabharata, the Hindu epic, taught great sages older than himself. He narrated the Bhagavatam, the story of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, and specifically His incarnation as Krishna.

At the end of the narration, one of the assembled *r̥sis* was moved to tears and fell at Sukha Brahma's feet. He said passionately, 'Please do not put this in writing. Once set in words, the deep truth, the intense beauty that can never be expressed in words will be lost. No one will know what happened here. By reading the words, no one will experience the energy play that happened during the narration, the spirit behind the words and the experience of our souls in listening to you. The facts will completely belittle the truth and energy in the whole thing.'

Sukha said, 'I agree; yet we must write this down. Just reading it may inspire future generations. The words will be a great source of inspiration and a driving force for every soul who reads it. It will drive them to experience the truth behind the words.'

Facts are chronological details found in history. The West has always been interested in facts, in chronology, in history and in what can be verified through some means. Western science needs to prove things with the intellect. It must prove things with logic in order to present them to the world.

The East is more focused on the truth. The truth is metaphorical, not factual. It transcends time and space and cannot be proved by straight logic. If logic can prove truth, it means logic must be greater than the truth, which thankfully, can never be the case!

Ramayana is the great Hindu epic that the sage Valmiki wrote about King Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. In this story, a demon king, Ravana, kidnaps Rama's wife Sita. Rama seeks the help of the monkeys who lived in the forest kingdom of Kishkindha (while on his pursuit of Ravana). This kingdom was ruled by the monkey brothers, Vali and Sugriva, assisted by Hanuman, who is worshipped as the monkey god all over India.

Valmiki described the size of the monkey population in Kishkindha. If taken literally, Kishkindha could not have held that many millions of monkeys.

Valmiki referred to such a large number in a sense of the truth, a metaphorical representation of the truth. Valmiki conveyed the power of the monkeys through that number. The number shows the strength he was talking about. Valmiki's

visualization was truth-oriented. Through the number, Valmiki referred to the energy of the monkeys, not the exact number of monkeys. Valmiki's focus was on the truth of the energy rather than factual representation.

Science prefers everything to be verified and quantified. This does not mean that what science has not verified and quantified is untrue. The law of gravity has operated ever since creation. It has been in existence since Existence. Otherwise the sun and planets would not move as they have always moved.

Yet, Newton discovered gravity only a few centuries ago. Society and religion didn't accept this fact until then. The Earth has always been round. That is the truth. Yet this truth was bitterly contested with people being put to death over the argument. It's only in the last millennium that some agreement was finally reached.

Science is limited in perception. It is like exploring a dense and dark forest with a tiny lamp. The lamp illumines only a few feet ahead and science proposes a theory based on what it sees within that limited space. Next, science advances forward with the light and sees a few more feet ahead. What they see is quite different from what they saw earlier. So they propose a new theory and discard the former one. This is how science operates.

Imagine if the whole forest was visible in one flash of lightning! This is how enlightened masters see the whole truth! This is the difference between science and mysticism.

Truth is like lightning. It is instantaneous; it is quantum. It is not evolutionary. Facts are logical, step-by-step, evolutionary. Each part must be understood before the next is understood. With truth, absorption is total, instantaneous and holistic. That's why it is difficult to grasp the truth through the intellect. It does not seem logical; it is not rational.

Throughout the centuries people have suffered misgivings because the truth they saw within their beings did not match the truth accepted by society and organized religion. Society and religion have established rules and regulations that have nothing to do with truth since it is difficult to interpret and regulate truth. Rules and regulations are based only upon facts.

Facts and truth do not always go together. Facts are one-dimensional, relating only to time, whereas the truth is space *and* time; it is multidimensional.

Here Arjuna has come to a level of maturity that is no longer satisfied with factual information. His quest is for truth. His confusions have disappeared. He has

no more questions. Only doubts. Doubts are great. They are clear indicators that the disciple is ready to receive and imbibe the master. Doubts are green signals whereas questions are red signals.

Questions prevent the master from opening up further. They interrupt the master and demand His reply to our words. Furthermore, when we are unable to follow, we question the authority of the living master, the living energy itself. We measure Him with our limited intellect. We limit Him with the limitations of our intellect and we use our intellect as the benchmark to judge Him.

A small story:

A young man approached an elderly person sitting under a tree near his village and told him that he was in search of a guru. The old man replied that he knew of a guru. He described him in detail, how he looked, where to locate him and so forth. The young man thanked him and moved on. For thirty years, he searched. Unable to find the guru, he gave up and headed back to his hometown.

Before reaching home, he saw an old man who exactly matched the description of the guru. Approaching closer, the young man realized that he was none other than the old man with whom he started his search. The young man asked, 'Why did you allow me to waste thirty years looking for you?'

The old man replied, 'Those years were not wasted. They molded you. When you came to me thirty years ago, I described myself, including the tree under which I sat. You were unable to recognize me. You were in a hurry to travel, wander and satisfy your ego. Your searching was necessary in order to dissolve questions that arose from your ego. Now you are ripe and ready to receive me.'

If the disciple is not in a receptive state, he is even unable to recognize his guru. Questions arise from ego. Doubts arise from consciousness.

Arjuna did everything. In the second chapter, when Krishna spoke about *ātma*, saying *nainam chindanti śāstrāṇi nainam dahati pavakaḥ* (Ch.2, verse 23) (The soul cannot be touched by any weapon or be burned by fire), Arjuna immediately asks: How will an enlightened man speak?

Why? Why did he ask that question? It was out of pure ego, to judge Krishna, to see whether Krishna was enlightened. Arjuna was checking the authority of the master. It started with violence, with questions.

Gradually, by Chapter 9 when Krishna revealed *rājavidyā rāja guhyam*, royal knowledge and royal secret, that Existence is intelligence, that the cosmic energy is intelligence, Arjuna's questions very slowly settle down.

When he heard the glory of Krishna, love started flowering in him. When Krishna revealed His cosmic form, the *viśvarūpa*, Arjuna experienced the ultimate consciousness.

In Chapter 9, with the revelation of divine knowledge and secrets, intelligence happened. In Chapter 10, with *Vibhūti Yoga*, divine manifestation, devotion started flowering. In Chapter 11, with *viśvarūpa darśan*, Arjuna had the experience. Now all questions are over.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa says beautifully, 'In a party, until the food is served, conversations and noise happen. Once the food is served, only the noise of serving and eating will be heard! Till the ultimate experience, questions will be there. After that, the expression of that experience alone will be there. All other noise will disappear.'

Arjuna first questioned the authority of Krishna. Then he moved into calculation of his own benefits. Now it is acceptance. First it was resistance, then indifference and finally acceptance.

Creative energy is different from accounting. Only God can create. If anybody creates anything, he experiences divinity at that moment. That is why pregnant ladies were worshipped in India during *vedic* times. It was believed that they healed people, just by their touch. Architects are creators. Engineers make good money, but architects have the satisfaction. They are creative. Without creativity, we miss life.

Here, Arjuna has finished everything. His calculations are over. He has come down to the level of doubts. With questions, the tone is different. Questions demand proof from the master. Doubts are not like that. They are just asking for some tips. Arjuna has come to the level of complete acceptance of the master. That is why, throughout this chapter, Arjuna is silent. He is ready to imbibe the master. He is ready to take everything thrown to him.

Q: You say that Arjuna has fallen silent. You imply Arjuna still has doubts. How does one differentiate whether one has doubts or questions? If we suppress doubts thinking they are questions, won't it create more confusion?

Surely. Suppression is never the solution. If what one has are doubts, these need to be cleared. How does one differentiate between doubts and questions?

Most of the time we do not listen to what someone says to us. The moment the other person opens his mouth, we wait impatiently for the opportunity to start talking. The space of listening is a preparation for us to rebut and refuse. It is not listening. It is preparation for war.

If we care to listen, if we are going to listen, we must respect the other person. Only then can we pay attention to what he is saying. We must accept that the other person has something valuable to say. If you do not believe that whatever the other person has to say will be valuable, then don't waste your time listening. Do something more productive.

If we care and if we listen without mental or physical interruption, we will internalize whatever is said. If internalization happens, even if we do not agree with what has been said, there will be no violence inside. Therefore, there will be no questions.

You may wonder why the person says something different from what you have experienced or feel. There will be curiosity to learn, to understand. You will want to know the other's perspective. You will not judge and condemn.

You may doubt. When you doubt, you emerge with a desire to learn. When you question, you emerge with a desire to teach. When you doubt, you have an open mind. When you question, you have a closed mind.

In my early days of teaching, a board outside the discourse hall read: 'Please leave your shoes and minds outside.' When you bring a full mind inside, a mind that overflows with the arrogance of your knowledge, what results is intellectual violence. Nothing will be allowed inside. What is the point of coming in?

When you sit in front of me with an open mind, my energy senses your questions and if you are aware you will find answers. When your mind is closed, you prepare questions without paying attention to what I say. When you truly listen, questions dissolve.

There may still be curiosity to learn why I say what I say without the violence to disprove what I am saying. You have digested what I said and you are hungry for more. You have doubts. These doubts seem to arise from your inner self. The truth is that the answers are also present in your inner self. You just need to seek. The answer to all your questions is within you.



Journey Into The Causal Body

15.1 Bhagavān says,

'It is said that there is an imperishable banyan tree whose roots are on the outside; leaves and branches are under the earth.

The leaves are said to be the vedic hymns. He who knows this tree knows the Vedas.'

*15.2 The branches of this tree extend below and above the earth, nourished by the three human attributes, **guṇas**. Its buds are the sense objects.*

This tree also has roots going down and these are bound to the resultant actions of humans.

Krishna refers to the causal body as the banyan tree. This is a continuation of the previous chapter. Chapters 14 to 17 are interconnected. They are connected discourses. In Chapter 14, *Guṇatraya Vibhāga Yoga*, yoga of the division of the three *guṇa* (attributes), Krishna speaks about the first four layers of our being. In this chapter, *Puruṣottama Yoga*, yoga of the supreme Self, He refers to the fifth layer.

Seven energy layers surround us. I talk about this in great detail in the Nithyananda Spurana Program (NSP) also called Life Bliss Program - Level 2. In this four-day course, the participants are taken through the experience that they will face at the time of death. At this time, the spirit traverses seven layers of energy that surround it before it leaves the body-mind complex. The seven layers are: physical, *pranic*, mental, subtle, causal, cosmic and *nirvanic* layers.

The first layer is our physical body, the body with flesh and bones. The other layers are components of our being. The totality of the seven layers is our body-mind-spirit system. The second layer is the *pranic* body, the body that controls air

movements inside our physical body. It controls *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *udāna*, *vyāna* and *samāna* (various air movements inside the body).

In the previous chapter, Krishna explains that this layer is filled with desires. He further explains how we create contradicting desires and suffer. Self-contradicting desires leave us in *rajas* (restlessness). They make us suffer and force us into *tamas* (inactivity or depression).

The fifth layer is the causal body. It is where all *samskāras*, our embedded memories, are stored in seed form.

Every night we enter the causal body in deep sleep. We take *samskāras* out from this layer and create the world.

In this chapter Krishna reveals the secrets of this layer. In the previous chapter, Krishna explained how to use the power of desire energy. Desire is also energy. That energy is abused by creating self-contradicting desires. Self-contradicting desires put us into restlessness. After that, if we don't correct ourselves, we fall into depression. He gave techniques to clear self-contradicting desires.

A few desires are our own. These are desires born out of our *vāsanās*, the mindset that we carry over from previous births. These are also referred to as *prārabdha karma*, *karma* we are born into this body with. These desires carry their own energy for fulfillment, as they are the basic needs and purpose with which we were born.

The universe blesses us with the power to meet all our real needs. As Mahavira, the founder of the Jain religion says, when we are born on this planet we are sent with all that we need. However, once here, we accumulate other desires. These desires are the wants that we borrow from others by comparing, copying and envying others.

Ramana Maharshi says, 'This universe can fulfill the needs of all its inhabitants; but it cannot fulfill the wants of even a single person.' How true!

When desires are borrowed, when they are based on coveting other people's belongings, there will be a serious contradiction between our wants and needs. Fulfillment of our needs gives happiness, true joy. That is why a poor man eats his simple meal of *roti* and *dal* (bread and curry) with such gusto.

Chasing wants, borrowed desires, causes sorrow. Have you ever seen a rich man eat with true happiness? His accumulated wealth invariably gives him ulcers,

diabetes, heart disease and many other problems so that he needs to have a designer diet. He needs personal trainers and dieticians to keep him fit and healthy.

Desires are caused by *saṁskāras*, deeply embedded memories of experiences and sense perceptions. *Saṁskāras* are stored in our unconscious mind layer. Over ninety percent of what we perceive through our senses is stored in the unconscious. Our mind finds it difficult to cope with even the remaining ten percent of sensory inputs that are fed into its conscious realm. Imagine what would happen if it were one hundred percent!

Embedded memories, *saṁskāras*, drive our actions. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says, 'We are our desires. Desires shape our will. Our will shapes our actions. Actions make us what we are.'

We do not realize that these desires are not the true desires that carry energy to be fulfilled. They are simply picked up from others based jealousy and comparison. But for the most part, our *saṁskāras* define us.

Now Krishna moves on to the next layer, where *saṁskāras* are stored in the seed form. Even if we move beyond the three layers of desire, restlessness and depression, these *saṁskāras* in seed form (called *bija saṁskāra*, *bija* meaning seed) need to be cleared.

Krishna speaks of techniques to destroy these *saṁskāras*. These may not express themselves in us right now. Yet if they are allowed to be there in seed form, at one time or another, they will exploit us.

In an office, some files are on the table, some are in the archives, while others are in the safety vault. The previous three layers are like the office table and archived material. This causal layer is the office safety vault. The next two layers are the external vaults. In the previous chapter, Krishna explains techniques to clear the table. Now He gives techniques to empty the office safety vault.

Krishna says, 'The roots of the tree are on the outside; the branches are inside.' From the causal body, if the roots are taken to be outside, it should be in the earlier three layers ending with the physical body. In a tree, the roots feed nutrients to the tree. The tree takes water and minerals through the roots. The roots decide the condition and growth of a tree. That is why Krishna says the roots of the tree are in the physical body. The tree of *saṁskāra* is watered by the five senses of the physical body and our actions. The *saṁskāras* in seed form in the causal body are formed and watered by the five senses of the physical body.

Krishna further says that the leaves are the *vedic* hymns and one who knows the tree is knower of the *Vedas*. He says *saṁskāras* are the *vedic* hymns, the *mantras*. *Mantras* are defined as *manasasya sthiraha iti mantraḥ*, whatever controls or stabilizes the mind, or *manaḥ trāyate iti mantraḥ*, that which redeems the life of man.

Words that are settled in our inner selves pave our road. Words expressed or coming out when we are alone, are the *saṁskāras* printed in the causal body. Our lives revolve them.

Words are double-edged swords. Whatever words we use to offend others settle in our inner self. They emerge whenever they find a chance to push out of our inner self. No man is intelligent enough to use harsh words on others and smooth words inside. It is an unconscious action. That is why, in ancient Indian society, the usage of harsh words was controlled by various customs.

Our mind is constantly occupied in inner chatter. Eventually we express part of this chatter in words. Part of it we suppress for fear of societal repercussions. We do not express what we fear would hurt others or what might be unacceptable to others. All these words settle deep inside our *maṇipūra* *cakra*, the navel energy center, which is the seat of words.

There are words we feel comfortable using based on our position relative to the listener. We may say harsh things to subordinates, spouses, children and others whom we think we control. We dare not dream of saying those words to superiors and strangers. Words that are harsh, whether expressed externally or internally, settle down within us. What goes out also goes in. These settle within our navel energy center. Both expressed and unexpressed words build our bank of *saṁskāras*.

I have mentioned before about the book, *The Hidden Messages in Water*. In it the Japanese scientist Dr. Masaru Emoto, talks about experiments with water. Emoto filled several bottles with ordinary tap water. He placed labels on the bottles with words such as love, hate, fear, worry, trust, faith, surrender, children, enemies, Koran, Bible, etc. He spoke to each bottle several minutes a day on the subject written on the label. For example, he spoke of love and with love to the bottle with the 'love' label. To the bottle labeled 'fear', he spoke of fear and with fear.

After a month or so, he froze the water in these bottles. He looked at these ice crystals through powerful microscopes. To his amazement, the crystals reflected whatever he had spoken to that particular water sample.

Ice crystals from the water labeled 'love' shone brilliantly as if they were diamonds. Ones from the bottles labeled 'fear' looked ghostly and misshapen.

Amazingly, the crystals from the bottle labeled 'Koran', to which he spoke from the Holy Koran, seemed to contain the image of the Holy Kaabaa shrine at Mecca.

Emoto then froze polluted industrial water and studied the crystals. As expected, these looked terrible. He invited Buddhist monks to direct their prayer energy to these bottles. When he analyzed the crystals of the energized water, these crystals looked like diamonds, exquisite and sparkling.

Emoto concluded that words and thoughts influence natural elements such as water. Our scriptures support his findings. There is an important corollary to his findings. The human body is made up of nearly eighty percent water. Therefore, every word we speak affects us and affects those who listen to them or at whom they are directed. The same effect happens with thoughts.

One who understands this can influence other people through his thoughts and words, perhaps more effectively than through his actions. Even we do not know how our thoughts and words influence and affect other people; they may not be as focused and effective, but they will still affect others and us.

For those in business and corporate life, communication is the key to success. Communication is not about our facility with language. It is not about the accent we cultivate. It is not about how fluently we speak. Communication is expressing what we feel. If our feelings and thoughts are negative, however much we try to hide these, our words or body language reveal the inner feelings and motives.

Someone who practices and masters the art of using only positive words automatically develops positive thoughts. These two are interconnected. Sometimes it is difficult to develop positive thoughts about certain people and situations. However, if we constantly change the negative words that we use to express our feelings into positive ones, our attitude towards others changes.

In business, this leads to money. When practiced sincerely in personal relations, this brings happiness. The basis of this is simple. We cannot say a word without visualizing the object. The moment we say 'cow', our mind visualizes the animal that we call a cow. Try saying 'cow' while thinking about an elephant. Even if it is not impossible, it makes us definitely uncomfortable.

Similarly, when we use negative adjectives to describe a person or situation, a picture crops up on our mental screen. With practice and awareness, we can erase that word before it surfaces with respect to that particular person and situation. As the word changes, our mental image changes.

In this area, we have good news as well as bad news. The good news is that at any time we can reorganize our causal body. The bad news is that our present negativity is responsible for any suffering that we go through.

A woman telephoned her husband at his office. Her husband explained that he was too busy to talk. The wife said, 'It won't take long. I have one piece of good news and one bit of bad news.'

Her husband replied, 'Tell me the good news because the bad news can be handled later.'

She said, 'I have just discovered that the airbag in our car is working perfectly.'

The bad news was obviously that she had had an accident; that is why the airbag in the car went into operation!

Every piece of good news has hidden bad news. So we have good news and bad news about the causal body.

Krishna further states that one who knows this tree is the knower of the *Vedas*. He says one who has the knowledge that *saṁskāras*, which constitute the causal body, are the result of the five senses, knows the *Vedas* or has the knowledge of life's guiding force.

The water a tree receives through its roots mainly decides the condition of the tree. If good water and manure are available, the tree flourishes. The leaves will be green. If poison is poured on it, the tree sheds its leaves and slowly dies.

This tree of *saṁskāras*, which is in the causal body, lives mainly due to the five senses. Krishna uses the word *aśvattha* which also means that which is transient, that which is not today as it was yesterday and which will not be tomorrow as it is today. It refers to material life where nothing is what it seems to be. Everything is temporary; as Buddha says '*aniccha*,' impermanent.

Life, as people say, is not unreal. If it were truly unreal, we would not be able to experience it. The fact that we experience material life and seem to enjoy it, even if temporarily, means it is real. It is unreal to the extent that whatever we experience is transient and impermanent.

Unreal does not mean nonexistent. If something is nonexistent, we cannot perceive it or experience it, even temporarily. Even a dream is real. We say dreams are unreal, but we cannot deny that we experience dreams. People recollect some dreams vividly. How can dreams be unreal? However, it is a fact that we do not have self-awareness while dreaming.

Once we become aware, we wake up from the dream. It has never happened that a lion or a murderer chasing a person has caught that person in a dream. It may happen in a movie, but not in real life. As soon as we are threatened, as soon as we become aware of ourselves, we wake up and the dream ends.

Dreams are not unreal in the sense that they are nonexistent; they are unreal to the extent that we are unaware. In the same manner, sages tell us that we are unaware even when we are awake. '*Jagrat, jagrat,*' they say, 'wake up, wake up.' They do not ask us to wake up from sleep. They ask us to wake up from our unaware wakefulness into an aware wakefulness.

Aśvattha signifies this state of unawareness. To understand this unawareness produced by our senses and directed by our *saṁskāras*, is to gain knowledge, the *Vedas*. Krishna goes on to explain more about this state of unawareness.

Krishna says the roots go upwards as well as downwards. He says the leaves of the tree are decided by the tricks of the five senses and the resultant action of mankind. The roots are not only in the physical body, but also in the action. Krishna says the tree is deeply rooted because the action of the entire mankind is always result-oriented. It is always guided by greed and fear.

The *aśvattha* tree, the banyan tree, is like a human body. Its roots, like in a human being, are above, like our hair. The hair is said to be a channel to draw in cosmic energy. Our limbs, hands and legs are like branches of the banyan tree. The human system is truly upside down!

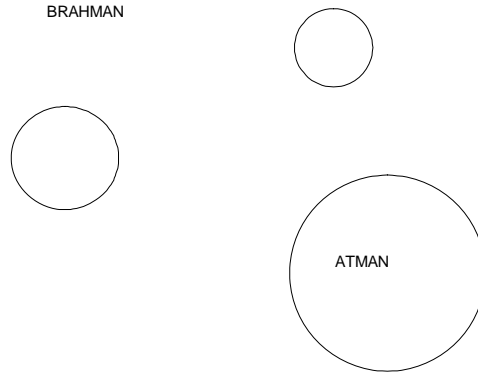
Krishna gives a beautiful tip to clear the *saṁskāras*. If we are not guided by greed and fear, if our actions are not result-oriented, no *saṁskāras* will be created. If you serve selflessly for at least half an hour a day, it will do you a lot of good.

While doing service, don't plan anything. Don't even plan to have a group of volunteers do the service. Just do any work that you can do. It may seem silly and a waste of time. But at a later date, this time alone will be felt as purposeful. If your service is fueled by greed or fear, you may end up in a mess and be a nuisance to others, too.

There are three interlinked elements in the *karmic* cycle. *Vāsanās* are the mental attitudes, the essence that the human spirit carries with it as it moves from body to body. Imagine for a moment that we are all bubbles on a white space. Let us imagine that these bubbles are circles drawn with a colored pen on a white paper. The colored circumferential lines are our body-minds, our boundaries.

The space inside the circles, or the bubbles, is the same as the white space that is outside. This white space is energy. Outside, it is the cosmic energy; inside, it is our life energy.

When we die, the colored lines are erased. The energy inside becomes one with the energy outside. Matter perishes into energy. This is death. It is the shift from one state to another.



One small difference exists though. Each individual white space is slightly colored by its *vāsanā*, its mindset. When the spirit goes into the cosmic space, it remains separated from the cosmic space by this shade or essence of *vāsanā*; the spirit then seeks a body-mind to suit the particular mindset with which it left the previous body. This is how rebirths are determined.

Vāsanā is like a seed. It is subtle. If we have insight, we can see the potential plant inside a seed. In fact, British scientists were shocked when they photographed a rose plant without flowers and found that the photograph contained impressions of flowers yet to come!

There is no *vāsanā* in an enlightened person. Consequently, when he leaves the body-mind system at death he fully merges into the cosmic energy without any separation. Thus, he has no rebirth.

For the rest of humanity, *vāsanās* carry over into a new body. This mindset creates the *saṃskāras* as the new body-mind develops. Experiences of the new body-mind allow carried-over *vāsanās* to bloom into *saṃskāras*. If *vāsanā* is a seed, *saṃskāra* is a plant. Finally, *saṃskāras* drive us into action. This action is *karma*.

Karma is the fully-grown tree born out of the seed of *vāsana*, which first grew into the plant called *saṁskāra*. *Vāsanās* are also called ‘*bīja karma*’ or *karmic* seeds.

To understand, imagine that a woman sees a pair of shoes in a store window while shopping in a mall. At first, it may be a curious glance. However, if she is attracted to it, she will look a few more times. A seed is sown in her mind to possess that pair of shoes. That is *vāsana*, the seed.

After a few looks, her mind tells her how elegant she will look in those shoes and how she will be a hit at next weekend’s party. A picture forms in her mind. She has now developed a strong desire. This is the *saṁskāra* working. The plant has grown from the seed.

Finally, she buys the shoes. She is convinced she cannot do without them. This is action; this is *karma*, the tree.

The first week after the party, she wears the shoes on all occasions. Over the next two weeks the attraction wears off and she wears them less often. Soon, the shoes are discarded under the stairs, not to be looked at again. Then she sees another pair of shoes!

The *saṁskāra* cycle and *karmic* cycle go on and on. As long as the desires are unfulfilled, they reappear. The *saṁskāras* remain to reappear again. If all we can afford is one pair of shoes, our desire will be fulfilled with one pair; that will be our mindset. Our *saṁskāras* for shoes will not bother us. We enjoy what we get. We do not hanker after the getting, without ever enjoying it fully.

This is why business tycoons are never satisfied no matter how much they achieve. How big is big? Business theory says that that which does not grow will shrink and die. Therefore, there is this constant struggle to expand. As long as the business objective is selfish, be it of benefit to the owner or the shareholders, final satisfaction in terms of achievement is elusive. The greed to acquire and build generates attitudes and behavior that are selfish and harmful to others. That is why corporations have earned notoriety for their disregard for public welfare and environment.

If corporate goals were to become more open, inclusive and of greater benefit to society and the world, corporate *saṁskāras* would dissolve, just as selflessness benefits an individual in dissolving *saṁskāras*!

Selfish desires when met can never give fulfillment. They are food for our ego and they serve no universal cause.

A small story:

The boy scouts in a school were required to do one act of social service daily and report it to their scoutmaster. Three boys jointly said that they helped an elderly lady cross the street. The master was not able to understand. 'Helping an old lady cross the road is a good service, but it does not require three boys. One is sufficient. Why three of you?'

The master was puzzled. The boys said, 'No sir, it was a job for three of us, because the old lady did not want to cross the street. We had to carry her!'

Systemized service often leads to such a situation. So don't plan anything. Just do service anywhere. Then the service you do will infuse enormous power into your being. For at least half an hour a day do something selflessly. I tell my devotees to contribute service to the mission for at least half an hour a day. This service is meditation. It inculcates the spirit of collective consciousness and lays the path to realizing the divinity underlying the service.

Bhagavan says, '*karmānubandhīni manuṣya loke.*' All our actions revolve around results. So, at least in this service, don't think of dollars or fame. Don't plan to impress. Don't plan to make your presence felt. Do the work for its own sake.

Even when we do so-called philanthropic or charitable work, we must be careful not to bind ourselves to the results of our actions. People ask, 'What is the point in meditation when the rest of the world suffers?' If we can genuinely feel the suffering of humanity and wish to do work to help that suffering, that is good. However, we must have the sense of this extended consciousness to feel this compassion.

Mostly we do charitable work based on notions of earning brownie points that will do us good in our afterlife, whether we believe in rebirth or not. Or we would like to see ourselves in the media and feel good. It fulfills our need for attention either in this world or in another world after death.

There is no concept of sin or merit on the spiritual path. No one, neither a Chitragupta nor a Saint Peter stands at the Pearly Gates enquiring whether you have done your necessary quota of charity work down below.

When you work, whether it is charitable as you and society define it, or commercial and mercenary, as long you do it with no expectation of results, your actions will be selfless. These actions are not motivated by fear and greed. They will not result in the hangover of *saṁskāras*.

This may seem difficult for the intellect to accept. When individuals and corporations embark upon philanthropic activities, they measure the success of their input, whether in terms of money or effort, by what has been achieved. Objectives need to be well defined, budgets need to be created, results need to be analyzed and the course must be corrected.

Yet, there is a way in which the process is defined and not the results. When a defined process is followed, results naturally follow. If we follow the right path, we reach the right destination. It takes courage to believe and implement this. It takes courage to say that we will work without expecting rewards. It takes a truly confident person to accept that what is important is 'doing' and not 'doership' and that status is not as important as the state of doing.

If we are able to accept this, we will find a true liberation within ourselves. A load will be lifted from our shoulders. The anxiety of constantly looking over our shoulder to peep into the future will be gone. We look at past results to define what needs to be done for the future. This so-called course correction is of no value since conditions in the future may be different from what prevailed in the past.

What needs to be done is focus on the present, define a path and a process and ensure that the process is followed. If this is done with awareness, results will follow.

Q: We have been told that charitable activity is good. I am confused when you say charity is not always good. Please explain.

Understand the meaning of charity. Charity must arise from selfless causes. In Sanskrit the word for wealth is *dān* and for charity *dān*. Giving up wealth and material possessions is charity.

Charity cannot be giving up what you can afford to give up. That is not charity. It is a matter of convenience. Charity cannot be for tax deductions. It is then business. Charity cannot be for getting your name and face in newspapers. That is pure ego boosting. Charity needs to be unselfish and anonymous. Charity cannot arise from feelings of 'mine' and 'I'.

Charity is something that you cannot afford to give and yet you give. Charity is treating the next person and the person after him as yourself and sharing what you

have with them. True charity arises from expanded consciousness. It happens when you believe that the world is your family, *Vasudaiva kuṭumbakam*.

A beautiful story from the ancient Hindu epic Mahabharata:

A mongoose went to check out Yudhishtira's *rājasūya yāga* - a celebrative fire ritual. This was the celebration ritual after the Pandava princes won the war. The mongoose was golden in half its body. After rolling over the ashes of the fireplace, the mongoose declared the ritual to be useless.

The startled princes asked why. The mongoose said that half its body had become golden when it rolled over sprinkled flour on the floor at the house of a poor *brāhmaṇa* family. The family had given all their food to a guest and starved to death.

Ever since, the mongoose had been visiting sacrificial sites hoping to make the rest of its body golden.

The greatest ritual of the greatest ruler on earth could not do this. It did not match the simple sacrifice of the poor *brāhmaṇa* family that gave away what it had at the cost of the life of its members.

This is charity. Charity can have no expectations. When you can walk away from all that is precious to you so that it benefits someone in greater need, you are charitable. When you get nothing in return and yet you are happy, you are charitable. Otherwise, whatever you do is just another business deal.



Cutting the Tree Down

15.3 The real form of this tree cannot be perceived. No one can understand where it ends, where it begins, or where its foundation is.

But with determination one must cut down this strongly rooted tree with the weapon of detachment.

15.4 One must then seek that place from which having gone, one never returns, and surrender to the supreme Being from whom all activities started in ancient times.

Krishna speaks further about the causal body where *saṁskāras* are stored. He is an extraordinary scientist. A scientist can honestly search for the truth; he can give up his own faith and belief for the cause of this search and is courageous enough to express the secrets, which he discovers step-by-step.

We see these qualities in Krishna. He is honest in His expression or search. He is ready to give up His small understandings for the bigger truth. He is ready to give up yesterday's truth for today's updated intelligence.

We can't wait for a train by looking at last year's timetable. Krishna continuously updates Himself. Lastly, He is courageous to open up the secrets in public. He is not worried about copyright and intellectual property rights.

The ancient *vedic* society in India believed that knowledge was free. The idea of copyright did not exist. Krishna is courageous enough to open up all the secrets.

He beautifully says, '*narūpamasyeha tatopalabhyate.*' No one can perceive the real form of this tree. No one can understand where it begins, where it ends or where its foundation is. However, with determination one should cut down this tree with the weapon of strong will and detachment.

No one can see what one has stored in one's causal body. It is like Pandora's Box. All the *saṁskāras* stored in the causal layer reveal themselves one by one. When we erase four of them, ten will surface. What is inside nobody knows. Only one thing is possible. All the *saṁskāras* can be cut by a strong will of detachment. With a strong will, with intelligence, the entire causal layer can be cleared.

People ask a master to show them how to get rid of *saṁskāras*. Only strong will and intelligence can do that. Do we ask the master's help to take our hands out of the fire? No! We know fire burns. So we withdraw our hands immediately. We ask the master only because the understanding is not there.

If the understanding is present, right action follows. If right action does not happen, be very clear that the understanding has not happened. Similarly, *saṁskāras* are dangerous. All that is needed is intelligence and a strong will of detachment.

Krishna explains that after cutting the tree of *saṁskāras*, surrender to the space of eternal silence, from where there is no coming back. This is the space in which the whole of Existence is established.

Freud and Jung based a lot of analytical work on the concept of identity or ego, parts of the brain and the body-mind system. I use these terms differently from psychologists and as synonyms. Identity is a collection of memories that define your belief of who you are. Identity or ego shapes your personality. All our decisions are driven by our personality, which in turn is the collection of memories, beliefs and values.

Almost all the information stored by the identity is in the unconscious regions of the mind. We do not know what is stored here. Ninety percent or more of our sensory perceptions are stored in our unconscious mind. We will go mad if all this information is grasped by our conscious brain.

One's identity is the collection of one's *saṁskāras*, past memories and desires that are stored in the unconscious mind. This is in the causal layer of our energy. Through deep and focused meditation, we can access this unconscious causal layer and dissolve the *saṁskāras* stored here. Once done, we no longer return as the same person. We are free of *saṁskāras* and liberated.

During the Nithyananda Spurana Program, the LBP Level 2, we meditate upon this causal layer using darkness as the guiding force. Metaphorically, this represents the unconscious that we are normally unaware of.

The spirit that leaves the body goes through a comatose state when it passes through this causal body layer. As long as the spirit has not crossed this layer, it can return to the body. This is the power of *saṁskāras*. These engraved memories or desires can pull the spirit back. That is why sometimes after many years in a coma, people return to consciousness. They are pulled back by unfulfilled desires. However, once the spirit crosses the causal layer, it cannot return to the body. It must move on to the next layer, the cosmic layer.

Once we access this point of dissolution of *saṁskāras* and move on to the cosmic layer, we no longer operate unconsciously at the behest of our stored memories. We move into a state of intuition, as opposed to our earlier state of instinct. We are no longer in an ignorant wakeful state, but in the truly awakened state of consciousness.

Numerous techniques are used to unlock the unconscious: hypnosis, mind control, visualization and so on. When we play with the unconscious, or subconscious as it is also termed, we are truly playing with the unknown. When we explore in this region without the support and awareness of meditation, we often experience results that we didn't expect and are not equipped to manage. That is why it is said, be careful what you wish for, it may come true.

Subconscious or unconscious activation of the mind without awareness has disturbing results. When studying the alarming increase of adults blaming parents for childhood sexual trauma, many accusations were found to be untrue; they were the result of psychiatrists planting these ideas into clients while treating them. Hypnosis may or may not discover hidden truths; however, in the wrong hands, it can plant harmful memories in the unconscious.

Bringing awareness into the unconscious through the super-conscious meditative route is the only correct way to dissolve accumulated *saṁskāras*.

Q: You say that your use of the term 'ego' is synonymous to Freud's usage but not the same. Please explain.

I am no expert on Freud. He studied many mentally ill people and formed conclusions which he applied to everyone. His theories have misled a lot of people. I wish he had studied enlightened people to arrive at a balance instead of basing his conclusions upon disturbed individuals.

Freud and his contemporary, Carl Jung, talk about id, ego and superego. Originally these were referred to as 'It,' 'I' and the 'Over-I' in German. These words 'id' and 'ego' are not Freud's words. They are the words of translators.

According to Freud, 'id' or 'It' was about instinct-based pleasures. It was about the primal emotions of fear and greed. It is mostly the unconscious. Superego or 'Over-I' is the conscience based upon societal, religious and political conditioning and conditioning, a sort of controlling father figure. It is the societal morality that governs us. Ego or 'I' is the self, the identity that mediates between the id and the superego. Ego according to Freud is partly conscious and partly unconscious. This is a simple explanation.

Actually, the expression of ego may be conscious, but what drives this expression is the unconscious. You can use any word you want, but the master uses 'ego' to represent not merely the 'I' but also the 'mine'. Together they form what you think you are. Many of us think that the concept of 'mine' arises from the realization of 'I'. No. Your first needs are the survival and pleasure needs that define your 'mine'. These arise from the *mūlādhāra cakra* - the base energy center.

Based on what you see as your possessions, you define your identity. You decide what you wish to be. The expression of 'I' starts from your *svādīṣṭhāna cakra*. So 'Mine' is about greed, arising from *mūlādhāra*. 'I' is about fear and insecurity, arising from *svādīṣṭhāna*.

A master refers to 'ego' as a combination of 'mine' and 'I'. Ego has two faces, the outer face and the inner face; *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*. What you project to others as to who you are is who you wish to be for the outer world. This is *ahaṅkāra*. This is projected as more than what you are. You are yourself an illusion. *Ahaṅkāra* is a greater illusion.

Mamakāra is who you inwardly think you are. You always underestimate yourself. You may say, 'That is not true, I have high self-esteem.' That self-esteem, is most of the time born out of insecurity. It is a defensive wall against society. You become a prisoner behind that wall. It starts to breed only subtle violence.

If you truly had high self-esteem, wouldn't you accept that you are God? Why not? I say that you are divine. My mission is to prove to you that *you* are God, not to establish that I am God.

Instead you believe your religion that calls you a sinner. Do you understand what sin is? Sin is ignorance. It is ignorance of the truth that you are divine, that you are God. Society and religion don't allow you to realize that because if you do, they cannot have much control over you.

Religions wish to rule you through fear and greed. Fear of hell and greed of heaven are the tools of stick and carrot that they use to manipulate you. Society likes that because without such controls, you will be unmanageable. You will be too free.

So they condition you from birth. They are the superego, the Over-I, the Big Brother watching over you so that you are under their control. The conditioning that they impose on you through parents, elders and environment, create *saṁskāras* in you. You are kept in bondage by these *saṁskāras*.

In this chapter Krishna explains the nature of this bondage and how you can break away and become liberated.



Cleansing Techniques

15.5 Those who are free from pride, delusion, and attachment, those who dwell in the Self, who are done with lust, who are free from the dualities of joy and sorrow, who are not confused, and who know how to surrender to the supreme person, attain the eternal consciousness.

15. 6 That supreme space of eternal consciousness, My consciousness, is not illuminated by the Sun or the Moon, or by fire.

Those who enter that space never return to this material world.

Krishna explains the same truth again at a deeper level. He had expressed the same idea in earlier chapters. But Arjuna was unable to understand. At that time, Arjuna was in the questioning mood. In the questioning mood, we miss the whole subject and are busy preparing questions. Now that mood has gone and there are only doubts, no questions.

With doubt, the disciple is open. He is open with his being waiting for the master to flow into him. Arjuna is ready to imbibe Krishna. He is waiting for the master's words. His inner chatter has ceased so there are no more questions. He now has the inner space and awareness to receive Krishna. That is why he is now able to understand.

Zen Buddhism calls it a *koan*, a riddle of sorts. Just one word is given. One famous Zen *koan* goes like this: 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' Another says: 'What was your face before your mother and father were born?'

Disciples meditate upon these *koans* and return to the master with answers. The master gives them a whack on their back and sends them on their way. Ultimately they experience the sound of one hand clapping. There is no expressed answer to a *koan*, only an experience.

Here Krishna says, ‘Those who are free from pride, delusion, and attachment, those who dwell in the Self, who are done with lust, who are free from the dualities of joy and sorrow, who are not confused, and who know how to surrender to the supreme person, attain the eternal consciousness.’

What wonderful usage of words!

He does not say who have ‘renounced’ lust. No, because renunciation won’t do. *Vairāgya* means beyond attachment and detachment. *Rāga* means attachment. *Arāga* means detachment. *Virāga* or *vairāgya* means beyond attachment and detachment. It is nonattachment.

Till the age of seven, we are attached to toys. By age eight or nine we are forced to be detached from these. By twenty, most people are beyond attachment or detachment to children’s toys. With detachment, we might have renounced it externally. But the inner urge for it prevails.

That is why Krishna uses fitting words: Those who are ‘done’ with lust. In this state, we know what we can afford. We know it is there. We can use it or throw it away based on the need. Life is also like a toy. If this is fully understood, you will live like a king, not an ordinary materialistic king, but an enlightened king, a *rājaṛṣi*.

This is a Zen *koan*. This is not for understanding. This is to be meditated upon. On meditating upon this technique, these characteristics will start flowering in you and give you a clear-cut idea about the causal body.

Earlier, Krishna explained ways to erase *saṁskāras*. Now He speaks on the construction of a proper layer. It is about re-programming your causal layer.

Krishna gives techniques for construction of the causal body.

Krishna’s words are like Zen *koans*. Actually Krishna uses the same words again. Not only words and expressions, He uses the same letters again. Earlier He used these words as advice. Now He uses same words as programming techniques. This chapter is about programming our causal layer; programming our *saṁskāras*. This program creates positive *saṁskāras* in our causal layer. As long as Arjuna was in the questioning mood, these same words were spelt out as advice. When he enters into the mood of doubts, he receives the same words as techniques. When the disciple is in a questioning mood, the master’s words will be taken as advice. Only when the disciple stops questioning and starts listening, these same words will be techniques.

With advice, you need keys to open the door. Techniques are the keys themselves. They are ready to open the door.

Arjuna receives the gist of earlier chapters. He receives the juice in this chapter. In North Indian monasteries, this chapter is chanted before every meal. This 15th chapter must be chanted before meals, since this chapter is a programming tool of the inner space. The mere words of this chapter can do wonders in re-programming your causal layer.

It takes less than five minutes to chant it. Anybody can do it. Don't worry about the meaning. If you understand the meaning, it is good. Yet, it is highly useful even if chanted without understanding. Repeating these words can program your causal layer. Especially, when you chant them in a mood of surrender, with due respect to the master, it directly touches the causal layer.

Arjuna is completely in a receiving mood. He is fully tuned to the master. If the disciple is completely tuned to the master, Existence helps him through the master. Arjuna needs no explanations, no logic. He is ready to imbibe the master.

Hence, Krishna utters the following words to program the causal layer. He gives techniques to create positive *saṁskāras*.

He says:

‘Those who are free from pride, delusion, and attachment, those who dwell in the Self, who are done with lust, who are free from the dualities of joy and sorrow, who are not confused, and who know how to surrender to the supreme person, attain eternal consciousness.’

Lust is difficult for a man to shed. Even the greatest of sages have succumbed to lust. Lust is of the body and as long as body consciousness remains, lust will stay. Only a person who has gone beyond body consciousness can drop lust.

A small story:

A small boy went to a kids' movie with his parents. It was about a lion cub and other animals in a jungle. The boy was thoroughly enjoying it. Suddenly there was a scene where the lion cub was trapped by a hunter and became terrified.

The boy was not able to bear this scene. He just jumped from his seat and ran down the hall towards the movie screen. He started throwing up his hands and legs as if in a fight with the hunter in the movie who was about to cage the

lion cub. Soon the other animals in the jungle joined together and drove away the hunter and rescued the cub.

The boy came back to his seat and proudly told his mother, 'See how I went first and all the animals followed me and we saved the cub!'

Just as the boy thought that the movie was real, we believe that the input perceived by our senses is also real. We are caught in the *māyā* or illusion created by our senses. The most powerful illusion is the lust within us.

Adi Shankaracharya says in the verses of Bhaja Govindam:

*nārī sthana bhara nābhī deśam dṛṣṭva mā kā mohāveśam
etan māmsa vaśādi vikāram manasi vicintaya vāram vāram*

Bhaja Govindam is considered the essence of *Vedānta*, the end of knowledge. Here Shankara says: 'Do not be overcome by furious desires of delusion by looking at the breasts and the navel of women. Realize again and again that these are only flesh and will deteriorate.'

Suppressing lust externally and not indulging in sex does not and will not make one enlightened. It only turns one insane. Celibacy of the body, without eliminating the fantasies of the mind, creates greater suffering than indulging in lust and sex. Enlightenment helps one transcend lust and sex by transcending the senses and attaining a no-mind state.

The Sanskrit word *brahmacari* is often misunderstood and wrongly translated. This word comes from two words, *Brahma* and *carya*. *Brahma* is the Ultimate and true reality; *carya* means to walk or follow the path. One who follows the path of reality is a *brahmacari*.

Time and again, this word has been taken to mean being a celibate because the first stage of one's life in the *vedic* period was *brahmacarya*. This was the period when a young boy or girl around the age of seven was placed in the care of a spiritual master, a guru. The master decided how the child should be educated based upon the child's aptitude.

At seven, they were taught Gayatri mantra to stabilize their mind and focus it on the inner Self. Children stayed with the master through adolescence. Given the nature of their training and upbringing, they remained celibate. Thus the term *brahmacarya* acquired the meaning of celibacy.

Based on their aptitude, these children followed different studies. Those who exhibited strong spiritual inclinations were taught *śruti*, the *Veda*, the *Upaniṣad*, the *Brahma Sutra*, etc. Those who were not so spiritually inclined, were trained to be householders and were taught the *Kama Sutra*.

Kama Sutra is not and was not a sex manual. Vatsyayana, the author, was an enlightened master who wrote it when he was sixteen. Vatsyayana was enlightened at a young age and went to his mother and told her that he was enlightened. To his mother, he was still a child.

She asked, 'What do you mean you are enlightened?'

Vatsyayana said, 'Now I know everything.'

His mother countered, 'You are just a child. If you know so much, tell me about love and sex.'

Vatsyayana's teaching to his mother about love and sex when he had no direct material experience of either is the *Kama Sutra*, the Bible for householders.

An enlightened master transcends sex. He is genderless. He becomes an *ardhanārīśvara*, a man-woman, a person who expresses both traditionally male and female qualities or attributes. One key attribute of enlightenment is genderlessness.

Krishna is direct. He does not believe in giving brain candy to keep you happy. He is brutally direct. He says, 'He who has conquered lust.' Lust is a primal emotion provided by nature for continuation of the species. Going beyond lust, conquering lust, is the first major step in realizing super-consciousness.

Humans are forever confused between love and lust. They think only animals are lustful. Actually, only animals are capable of *pure* lust when they mate. Humans, with their rationalization, can neither be lustful nor loving. So, they are forever in the twilight zone, dissatisfied and unfulfilled.

When a man and woman are capable of indulging in sex one hundred percent driven by pure lust, they will find that this lust will turn into love. For that, each needs to be immersed in the other. The act will then be an experience that expresses love.

In ancient times, lust and sex left the householder around the age of forty because they had enjoyed these fully. When a desire is fully experienced it leaves your system. Do you know the *mantras* chanted at marriage? These days only the priests who conduct marriages get married, because only they understand the meaning! No one else does.

In *Saptapadi*, the seven steps that the couple takes together after tying the wedding knot in Hindu marriage ceremonies, sacred *mantras* are chanted in front of the fire-witness wherein the wife says to the husband, 'Become my eleventh son' and the husband says to the wife, 'Become my eleventh daughter.' It means that in the eleventh year of marriage, their intimacy would be so great that they become each other's child! There is a deep intimacy; there is a wonderful relationship. These words were not poems. They were the guidelines for living.

Now marital relationship has become a business for security or material benefits. You may live in the same home, but not in a homely way. You have to remove the imagination and dreams from your lust, both about your partner's body and your own body.

Many of us are ashamed of our body. We hate it. All body pains and chronic skin diseases arise out of low self-esteem and disrespect to our body. We would like to be someone else. We would like to shape our body and dress like someone else. We stop staying within the boundary of our own skin, and fantasize about being someone else.

Whenever we hear our name we think of our face, not our whole body, because we are not comfortable with our body. When we do not accept ourselves fully and copy someone else artificially, we can be beautiful at best, but never graceful. Grace comes from within.

For the next few days, after bathing, watch your body with love. Feel comfortable. Our body oozes bliss all the time. Yet we feel only the pain. If we are relaxed with our body, our mind will not wander. Usually, when we are at home, our mind is in the office and when we are working, we wish we were at a party. Where our body is, our mind will not be.

Also, we love someone as long as that person does what we say, as long he obeys us. A mother says, 'I loved my daughter deeply till she married someone not of my choice.' Is this love? It is slavery to our ego. As long as the daughter was an extension of the mother's ideology and personality, she felt love.

Add friendliness to love. As of now, our love and lust are deep-rooted violence, to own the other person, to conquer the other person while he or she resists. It's a war. Instead, add friendliness to relationships. Welcome the partner as he or she is; do not just accept him or her. Welcome and accept the mind, body and being as it is.

Are we friendly even to our own body? No, we are not. If we watch carefully, we disrespect and abuse our body. We stay up late and watch television even if our body cries out for sleep. We gorge ourselves on food even if our stomach is full. We smoke even if our lungs cry out. We drink ourselves to unconsciousness. We treat our body like a garbage dump. We are like the pig that shoves its nose into filth thinking it can escape the smell of the filth. We torture our body for what we feel is enjoyment.

We are bothered about terrorism around the globe. Yet we ignore violence at home and violence against our own body. Sadism and masochism do not bother us, terrorism does. But we torture ourselves with guilt and others with our perfectionism. This is also violence, a subtle form of terrorism.

A man once told me, 'My wife is a lawyer.' I asked, 'Does she go to court?' He replied, 'No, she argues at home.'

Drop your imagination and dreams. Add friendliness towards yourself and others, towards their body, mind and being. Carry words that heal others. Carry your body in a way that heals others. Carry friendliness with you always. This is a spiritual process. Carry the grace and goodwill of Lakshmi instead of observing fasts and *pūjā*.

The first time you approach others with friendliness, they may not receive you openly because of your past behavior. Persist and persevere. Don't stop even if others do not reciprocate. Carry on till others believe and reciprocate.

Drop all imagination about your body, mind and being and those of others. Add friendliness towards yourself and others and persevere. Lust will turn to love. Your being will be in eternal bliss.

Krishna says, 'That supreme space of eternal consciousness, My consciousness, is not illuminated by the sun or the moon, or by fire. Those who enter that space never return to this material world.'

These words are not advice. They are for contemplation. Advice is the only thing everybody gives and nobody takes! Krishna gives these words to program our causal layer. These are words to contemplate, to meditate upon. They are the hymns to be meditated upon.

In the Nithyananda Spurana Program, LBP Level 2, participants are guided through a meditation upon darkness while working on the causal layer. This darkness is not mere absence of light. It is energy.

The causal layer of energy is the passage through which the spirit passes on its last leg before it leaves the material world. When the spirit is stuck in this causal layer, one is in coma. One can be stuck in this layer for a long time.

When the physical body cannot bear the pain of the process of death, it escapes into coma. As long as the person is in coma, the spirit is in the causal layer of energy. This means that the spirit can return to its physical body from this causal layer at any time. That's why we come across people who have returned to life after years of being in coma.

All near-death experiences, NDEs, are of people who return from the causal layer of energy. For various reasons, the spirit returns to the body it had left, before it reaches the no-return zone. Unlike a coma, this is a quicker journey and return.

Those who go past the causal layer, this layer of energetic darkness, where neither the sun nor the moon shines, nor fire warms, progress onwards to the cosmic layer and then to the *nirvanic* layer, which signifies true liberation.

One can meditate upon this technique, upon this truth expounded by Krishna, through the darkness meditation that teachers teach in some of our meditation programs. This meditation, which focuses on darkness, liberates one from the fear of death and the fear of loss of identity that causes the fear of death.

Death is not an option. Death of the body is certain. Separation of the spirit from the body-mind is painful. Vivekananda says it is like a thousand scorpions stinging at once.

At death the spirit leaves the body shell and merges into infinite energy. It then reappears in another shell, another body. As discussed earlier, it is like drawing circles on a whiteboard. The background is universal energy and the perimeters of the circles drawn are the bodies that envelop the individual spirit. These circles separate individual spirit or self from universal energy or Self.

When we erase these circles, the whiteness within the circles merges into the whiteness of the background. Individual self merges with universal Self. When the spirit is such that it has gone beyond attachment and lust and is constantly focused on the Self, then there is no return for that spirit into another body-mind complex. Else it returns.

Krishna points out that the death of the body is a certainty, however, the death of the spirit is impossible. The spirit lives on. When the spirit is evolved it doesn't revert to a mental setup that it transcended in the previous birth, that's all.

Q: Can Near-Death-Experiences lead to enlightenment?

Near-Death-Experiences, NDEs, can be highly spiritual experiences, but they are not enlightenment experiences. You do not have to die or nearly die to become enlightened! On the other hand, when you become enlightened, you die in a different sense since you lose your past identity.

Many people have such powerful NDEs, which are so different and shocking to their logical minds, that they go through a cognitive shift. This leads to a transformation in the way they think and act.

Most NDEs follow a pattern. These people who have experienced them say that they float away from the body. They see themselves dying. If in an operating theatre, they see and hear what the doctors and nurses do and say. They see what they normally cannot from their position on the bed. Typically, they go through a dark space at the end of which they see light. The light is comforting. They experience no fear, just peace.

Especially if they are medically trained, some see the gradual cessation of their body-mind functions. They may seek help if they are able to, but not out of any fear. They are happy to move towards whatever there is at the end of the dark tunnel.

Depending on cultural and religious beliefs, they may see figures that seem to beckon them. Finally, they are told to go back. Or they are sent back. They feel themselves back in the body and they wake up.

People lose their fear of death when they have NDE. Whatever they experienced gives them the faith that there is something more to life than mere material benefits. Many start believing in rebirth and reincarnation. The awareness develops that one is not bound by this body and mind and that we are all interconnected beyond body and mind. People develop more tolerance and pay more attention to relationships. They develop a greater belief in a superior being, a God.

In our Life Bliss Programs, we take participants through meditations that replicate the death experience. Without having to go through an uncontrolled NDE, one can shed the fear of death through these meditations under safe and controlled conditions. Participants also go through identity dissolution experiences. They learn that there is more to life than possessions and acquisitions. They discover who they are and what they need to do in this life.

Enlightenment is your natural state. You become enlightened when you understand who you truly are. In that sense, a NDE can direct a person towards the realization of one's Self and therefore, enlightenment.



Conditioning

15.7 The living entities in this conditioned material world are a portion of My eternal Self.

In this conditioned material world they are attracted by the six senses, which include the mind, dwelling in prakṛti, the active energy principle.

15.8 The spirit in the body-mind living in this material world moves from one body to another carrying these just as wind carries fragrance.

Krishna uses a new word, 'conditioning'.

Recent research tells us that human beings walk on two legs due to conditioning. A group of scientists recently found a seventeen-year-old boy in a forest. Wolves had raised him. The scientists tried to teach him how to walk on two legs and speak a few words. They were unable to do this and he died within a year.

Man walking on two legs is due to conditioning. Everything we consider as human nature is nothing but conditioning.

Zen Buddhism has a beautiful technique for de-conditioning. For twenty-one days, the aspirant has to remain in a room. He can eat and sleep. But he must throw away everything he has seen or heard from his mind. Nothing he has seen or heard should enter his mind. They say within twenty-one days he will be enlightened. It is a tough job. It is tough to be in such a position even for twenty-one minutes.

Here Krishna says, 'conditioned world'. Everything is conditioning. Right and wrong, honor and dishonor, are all conditioning. We think of honor or dishonor because we are taught that way.

We are conditioned. If a group of people give us a certificate and clap their hands, we take it as an honor. That is the way we are taught. But never judge yourself by others' applause. This idea of honor drives many people mad. Never accept the judgment of the crowd.

A small story:

Winston Churchill was delivering a lecture. About 10,000 people were listening. A press person asked Churchill what he felt about such a huge gathering. Churchill replied, 'Never judge my importance by the crowd. Today there are 10,000 persons. If you announce that I will be hung in public tomorrow, there will be 100,000 people. It will be a scene to be seen.'

The crowd cannot decide right and wrong or honor and dishonor. Your integrity, your honesty to the truth, your depth of self-awareness alone can decide your worth.

Here Krishna gives these meditation hymns to re-program your causal layer, your *saṁskāra*.

Another small story:

A Sufi mystic begged a king for a meal. The king shouted at him, 'Nobody here knows you.'

The mystic laughed and said, 'Yes. I agree. Nobody here knows me. Yet I know myself. In your case, everybody knows you. However, you don't know yourself.'

Only those who don't know themselves worry about others knowing them.

After crossing the three layers and going beyond the causal layer, you enter a space where you are free from conditioning. May you be free from all conditioning!

Krishna says:

'They are attracted by the six senses that include the mind.'

There are five physical senses and the sixth sense is the mind. However, according to me, the mind is the only sense and the so-called five physical senses are slaves to it. The mind jumps around. If the mind can be handled, all the other five can be handled.

A small story:

Queen Madalasa gave birth to seven children. Each child became enlightened by the age of seven and moved out of the kingdom. Their father, the king, was puzzled. How did seven children in a row become enlightened? He probed into the issue and found that Madalasa had taught them one phrase, *tat tvam asi* (You are That). Just by internalizing *tat tvam asi*, their mental setup changed. They were cleared of *saṁskāras* in the causal layer. They became enlightened.

Enlightenment is the removal of *saṁskāras*, the elimination of embedded memories, and the dissolution of conditioning. We return to our pure original state. This is why enlightenment is referred to as *samādhi*. The Sanskrit word *samādhi* means 'returning to the original state'.

The spirit in the body-mind living in this material world, moves from one body to another carrying these *saṁskāras* just as the wind carries fragrance. *saṁskāras* in one body quit that body and take shelter in another. This continuous vicious cycle of movement of *saṁskāras* is what Krishna refers to as *saṁsāra*, the life-and-death cycle.

Krishna says 'taking these'. What does He mean by 'these'? In the previous verse, Krishna talked about the six senses, including the mind. He refers to them here.

When the spirit leaves one body and moves to another body, it carries the six senses, the five physical senses and the mind, in the same way as the wind carries fragrances. Just as the wind carries fragrances, consciousness carries *saṁskāras*, causal level imprints, from body to body.

Krishna answers a frequently asked question about sin. People ask whether sins come with them from one birth to another. Sins never follow. Only imprints travel. For example, if a man commits one hundred murders, the quantity will not follow, but the basic mentality of violence accompanies and tortures him. Only the mental setup is carried.

The concept of *karma* is often used to justify actions, by saying, 'It is our *karma*,' 'It is our fate,' 'It is our destiny, what can be done?,' 'Whatever had to happen has happened.' This is pure fabrication and justification of our negative deeds.

We have the freedom to act: the free will to decide and act. Ironically, only an enlightened master has no freedom. Enlightened masters are driven by *Parāśakti's* will; they are guided by Her, that universal power, into doing what they must do.

Understand: I cannot take a single step on my own. My limbs move in accordance with Her wishes.

The ordinary human being is in control of his destiny. All that nature provides are paths in our lives and we choose the path we travel by. We decide the path. What drives us into taking one fork or another is *vāsana*, the ‘smell’ that the spirit carries. It is the subtle imprint of our past actions, *saṁskāras* and *karmas*. It is not definitive or predestined.

We have the choice to redefine that *vāsana*, that smell, into either a stink or a wonderful fragrance. It is in our hands only. Whether we wish to travel in the same merry-go-round or decide to break out and walk free is our decision.

Ramakrishna beautifully says that the soul travels from one body to another like we move from one room to another. When He left His physical body, His wife Sarada Devi was about to remove her jewelry. (Traditional Hindu families never allow a widow to wear jewels, especially the sacred thread signifying marital status, and bracelets.)

Just as she was about to remove the sacred thread, Ramakrishna appeared and told her not to remove it. He said, ‘Where have I gone? Just to another room. Don’t remove your jewelry.’

From that time till her end, Sarada Devi followed His words. This may seem easier today. But in those days, in an orthodox Hindu family in a small village, it was not so. She was highly courageous.

Someone who leaves all social conditioning, who sheds all *saṁskāras* in his causal layer, moves from body to body as easily as moving from one room to another.

We create big buildings. We accumulate a good bank balance. We have friends. Just as we start enjoying life, suddenly death appears before us. We fear death only because it takes everything away from us. If we are unattached, if our causal layer is not filled with *saṁskāras*, if we are not gripped by social conditioning, we will not fear death. We know it is like moving from one room to another.

As Krishna says elsewhere, ‘It is like changing one dress for another.’

In one of his parables, Ramakrishna says:

An ascetic who was deep into *tantric* practices went into a forest to worship the divine Mother. He placed all the ritualistic instruments around him and

started worship. A tiger roaming that forest attacked and killed him. A passerby saw this and quickly climbed a tree to save himself.

Once the tiger had left, this man climbed down and out of curiosity sat near the corpse and started praying. Suddenly the divine Mother appeared and told him that she was pleased with his spiritual practice, and that he could ask for any boon.

The surprised man asked, 'Mother, the other man was working hard on his worship. Yet, You allowed him to be killed. I just came by and sat down where he had left, and prayed to You. You have now blessed me. Why?'

Devi said to him, 'For many births before this you have been my devotee and you came here not by accident, but by the *saṁskāras* and *vāsanas* of your past. I appeared before you as a result.'

The *saṁskāras* of this life are the result of *prārabdha karma*, the mindset, along with the spirit from the *vāsanas* of the past birth that are carried into this birth. It is always a mix of pain and pleasure.

Q: Swamiji, you say conditioning makes us do what we do. Isn't there a built-in programming of the human body-mind system that dictates what we do?

This question needs to be answered at many levels. Let me be brief.

Science earlier believed that the brain developed on its own as the body grew. They assumed that as far as normal physiological factors were concerned, a person grew the same way whether he was brought up in one environment or another.

Some years ago they uncovered a teenager in a Los Angeles suburb locked up in a room. Her parents, for whatever reasons, brought her up in seclusion and never let her out. When released, she would not walk, talk, nor understand anyone. I believe she finally died ten years later. Neurosurgeons who performed the autopsy found that many parts of her brain had withered away.

It is now understood that the synaptic connections (the connection between brain cells), depends upon how that part of the brain is used. The brain comes with millions, possibly billions, of potential connections. These connections are made if that part of the brain is used. Walking and movements activate some connections.

Speaking, hearing and other sensory inputs activate some of these connections. In the case of this girl, many connections were never used and therefore never activated.

Science recognizes that whatever the innate potential of the body-mind is, conditioning allows that potential to be exploited. Whether it is done in what we consider a positive or negative way depends upon local culture and upbringing. The body-mind system as it exists at birth takes care of some autonomous activities, yet even these depend upon factors of nurture, such as food, shelter, care, etc.

That is why there is nothing predetermined. Yes, the last desire of our previous body dictates the environment in which our next body is born. Beyond that, it is a matter of probability, not certainty, as to how the evolution of that body turns out.

Quantum physicists understand and agree with this. Science today knows that all events are probabilistic, and not determined by so-called laws of nature. Nature just is. It has no laws. It is beyond laws.



You Are Your *saṁskāras*

15.9 The living entity, the spirit, leaves one body, takes another body and gets new eyes, ears, nose, tongue and sensing body according to the saṁskāras it had in its causal layer and enjoys the new mental setup.

15.10 Fools can neither understand how a living entity can quit his body nor what sort of a body he enjoys under the spell of gunas, the attributes and moods of nature. Only those whose eyes are trained by knowledge can see these things.

‘The living entity, the spirit, leaves one body, takes another body and gets new eyes, ears, nose, tongue and sensing body according to the *saṁskāras* it had in its causal layer and enjoys the new mental setup.’

Here Krishna reveals another secret. He says, ‘You create a body according to the *saṁskāras* in the causal layer.’

There is an Indian science called *sāmudrikā lakṣaṇa śāstra*, the technique of studying body features. By observing our physical body structure, experts can read and reveal our mental setup. They know the relationship between mind and body.

Krishna says that we create our sensory organs, according to *saṁskāras* in our causal layer. Krishna says that living entities create all five senses through the mind or mental setup. This happens not only when we take another body. Everyday when we wake up from deep sleep, our senses are recreated. If we change our mental setup, within a short time, our face changes.

Our ‘mind’ is the intelligence spread all over our body. It is the intelligence that resides in our cells. Each cell carries genetic intelligence. Body and mind are not separate entities. It is just body-mind or mind-body, one system. Within this body-mind system, scientists say that every moment of your life thousands of cells die

and thousands of new cells are created. This is a constant process that Nature, the universal intelligence, dictates. It does not happen because of us; it happens in spite of us.

In a period of a little under two years, every part of our body, every cell in our body, gets renewed. Our body as it was a year ago is not the body it is today. Our present body is not the body it will be a year from now. This is not fiction; it is a proven scientific fact.

Then why do we behave the same way as we have for years? Why do illnesses plague us for years, even though the cells are no longer the same?

Each cell as it dies, leaves behind a memory that the newly created cell follows. That is the *saṁskāras* within us. The *saṁskāras* ensures the continuation of a pattern despite complete changes in the body-mind system. This *saṁskāras* are more powerful than the rest of the body-mind system. It decides and drives.

The deep sleep we go into everyday is a rehearsal of our death process. We die and are reborn. Our subtle body leaves the gross body and returns reenergized if we allow it to. It is in our hands to maximize this process of rejuvenation that happens automatically everyday.

Through meditation we can clear our *saṁskāras* and be reborn. We can change our features, our character and behavior, all by reprogramming our *saṁskāras*.

That is why people radiate grace after they start meditation. Beauty is created by make-up. Grace is radiated by meditation. Grace makes the occupant feel at home. It soothes the atmosphere. Beauty creates excitement. Beauty moves the other person into *rajas* (restlessness). Grace creates calmness, *satva*. Grace puts the other person in energy.

People reminisce about great masters like Ramana Maharshi and say that He imparted wisdom through silence. It is the enlightened master's grace that penetrates the other person's energy and changes that person's *saṁskāras*.

All that we need to do in an enlightened master's presence is just be, be open and silent and allow the master's grace to penetrate us. There is nothing that we need to do. The master's grace does whatever is needed.

One version of the great Indian epic Ramayana says that when princess Sita, the leading lady of the epic, entered the court of King Janaka, her father, all the great kings, monks and mystics stood up automatically. This was not protocol. The grace

she radiated caused this response in them. Beauty can create only temptation in the other person. Only grace can create respect. The grace radiating from Sita's being made everybody stand up.

Zen Buddhism says that if we can walk on a lawn without killing the grass or creating a path with our footsteps, we are eligible for *sanyās*. I doubted this. I thought it was impossible. After all, the whole body weight is there. How can grass bear such a load and not leave imprints?

Once I went on a safari in South India. I sat on an elephant and the caretaker came along with me. It was evening. It became dark. The caretaker had no torch or light. I asked him how he would find his way back home. He replied, 'I have created a path by my daily walk that I can follow even in darkness.'

I asked about the elephant because it traveled with him everyday. He said, 'The elephant's feet do not create a path. The elephant and other animals do not destroy grass as they walk over it.' I started calculating the load exerted by one foot of the elephant. At the least, it works out to four times that of an average man. However, it did not create a path. It did not kill a single blade of grass. In spite of the physical mass, there was no damage to the environment.

That is why Zen Buddhism says we are eligible for *sanyas* only when we can walk on the lawn without killing a blade of grass. The negativity, arrogance, violence, negative *saṃskāras* in our causal layer, makes us feel heavy on earth. If we feel heavy around our navel area, we carry negative *saṃskāras*. The feeling of heaviness is not connected to our weight. It is due to imprints in our inner space. A person who feels light radiates grace from his being and he never creates a path on a lawn. He never kills a blade of grass by his walk.

Zen says we are spiritually evolved souls only when our feet do not create a path, when we float while we walk, when we do not go against nature.

Man is the only animal who has gone against nature.

A small story:

A man wanted to do away with his wife and her pet cat. In India, there used to be no way to divorce one's wife. So he decided to get rid of at least the cat. He took the cat ten miles away in his car, dropped it off and returned home. Just as he entered his house, the cat also arrived. He was shocked.

The next day he took the cat and traveled forty minutes away. He reached a thick forest he had never seen before. He abandoned the cat there.

He started his return trip and reached home. To his utter amazement, the cat was standing at the doorway.

The third day, he took the cat, blindfolded it, put it in a sack, drove a very circuitous route, left it in a certain spot and started driving back. He drove for one hour and then called up his wife and asked, 'Dear, is the cat at home by any chance?' The wife replied that the cat had just returned. The man said, 'Please can you somehow find out how to get home. I have lost my way.'

Animals are one with Nature. It is human beings who have gone against Nature, who have lost their way.

Here Krishna says, we create our senses according to our *saṁskāras*. This happens not only when we die and take birth; we redesign our senses to suit our *saṁskāras* everyday, when we wake up too. If we wake up with the right mental setup, we will have our senses accordingly and for the whole day we can enjoy it. If on the other hand, we get up with negativity, we suffer.

The few moments immediately after we wake up are crucial. Whatever we feel will be reflected the rest of the day. If we radiate joy, our whole day will be joyful. If we are irritable, our whole day will be irritable.

Sufi masters practice a beautiful meditation everyday. Just as they wake up, when their subtle body is settling into their gross body, they practice this meditation:

While still lying down and with eyes closed, run your hands over your head saying with great awareness and belief, 'I love my head and hair. They are so beautiful. I am so grateful to the universe for having given me such a beautiful head and hair.'

Continue throughout the rest of your body. Touch each limb, each part of your body with great love. Express love to that part, express appreciation to that part, to its beauty and grace and express gratitude to the universe for giving you such a beautiful body-mind.

Continue throughout your body down to your feet and toes. Finish by touching your toes with great love and feeling, 'I love my toes. They are so beautiful. I am grateful to the universe for giving me such beautiful toes.'

Do this with awareness everyday at least for twenty-one days. You will be amazed at the changes that happen within your body-mind. You will develop grace

and equally important, you will learn to love yourself, which means that you can love others without difficulty.

Krishna further says, the type of senses we create determines the type of sensory objects we enjoy. If we create positive senses, we enjoy a positive life. If we create negative senses, we suffer a negative life. The type of senses we create determines what type of objects or pleasures attract us, and we experience that.

Our senses, intelligence and our body-mind system create the energy field around us. This energy field attracts similar energy fields. If we are negative, if our perceptions are negative, we attract people with negative mindsets and descend into a vicious cycle. However, if we convert negativity into positive emotions and positive perceptions, we attract like-minded, positive people.

This is extremely important in spiritual progress. It is easy to make progress and evolve when we are with a master. However, when we get into the company of people who are not following the path, it is easy to slip from our path.

Shankara says, '*satsaṅgatve nissāṅgatvaṁ*.' Good company, the company of like-minded people who seek the truth, helps us become unattached. This is the starting point and it is crucial. That is why Buddha created the *saṅgha*, the institution, and Christ created the group of disciples, to carry the torch. The master's institution is as important as the teachings of the master. The institution is the fuel that keeps the Truth burning and alive.

That is why I am keen to create ashrams or communities where like-minded people can live together and grow in spirituality. The energy created in this process cannot be created in the external world. We can be idealistic and say that we can meditate anywhere; however, in reality, spirituality thrives either in aloneness or in like-minded communities. Like energies attract one another and enhance one another.

Krishna provides a wonderful punchline in the middle of this chapter.

'Fools,' He says. Krishna uses the Sanskrit word *mūḍhaḥ* that means 'fool'. Fools can neither understand how a living entity can quit his body nor what sort of a body he enjoys under the spell of *guṇa*, the attributes and moods of nature. Only those whose eyes are trained by knowledge can see these things.

The first thought with which we get up from our bed plays a major role in our enjoyment throughout the day. What is our first thought usually? First we feel awake. We feel our body. Then it may be the fear that we must go to our office or

it may be the greed to finish some work. At the stroke of the thought, fear or greed, our body jumps out of bed. We connect to our body through fear or greed.

Krishna says that if we catch our body with fear or greed, we attract more and more fear or greed throughout the day.

There are many gates to enter the body. Never enter through the fear or greed gate. Get up with a spiritual thought. Remember your master or favorite God. Practice it consciously for a few days. Then it will become your routine. Don't connect to your body with fear or greed; you will attract more and more greed or fear.

Let your first thought be spiritual. Remember your master or God or anyone divine and thank Him. Thank Him for the extended life. Everyday that you wake up is an extension to your life on planet earth. Thank divinity for the grace, for the extension.

Waking up from bed is not our birthright. Of course, birth itself is not our right. It is a pure gift from Existence. Be grateful to the Divine for this day and extension here.

If we wake up from bed with spiritual thoughts, that consciousness stays with us the whole day. If we are made to get up from bed by material thoughts, we start our day with irritation. The entire day we carry the same irritated mood.

When we are in deep sleep, we are in touch with the causal layer. While waking up, we travel along the other three layers and reach the physical body. The three layers are like a shopping mall with various *saṁskāras*. According to our causal layer, we pick up the related *saṁskāras* and contact our physical body and design our senses accordingly.

Just for twenty-one days, wake up with a spiritual thought and check your face. It will be changed. Your eyes will have a new look.

I am not putting forward a theory. I have experienced this. A few hundred thousand people around the world practice these words. From that authority, I tell you, this is a vibrant technique.

Don't contact the body with *tamas* or *rajas* (depression or restlessness). If you get up with greed or fear, you design a body that radiates greed or fear and thereby attracts incidents that put you in greed or fear.

When you travel from the causal layer to the physical body, pick up *satva* (peaceful or blissful) *samskāras*. Have a spiritual thought as the first thought. Think of your master or God or anything that gives you a spiritual memory. That is why in India, ancient mystics tell us to meditate early in the morning. At least for a few seconds be in a blissful mood. Your inner space will be fresh and new.

Krishna says, 'Only those whose eyes are trained by knowledge can see the truth of this science.' The whole thing is before you. He says fools cannot understand and only those with eyes of knowledge, can see. The choice of being a fool or a man with eyes of knowledge is left to us. The choice is completely ours.

Q: Swamiji, you talked about the importance of ashram communities in spiritual development. What about people who cannot live in such communities? Can they progress?

Not everyone in ashrams becomes enlightened. Conversely, there is no condition that one must live in an ashram to become enlightened. Enlightenment is our natural state. We just need to understand and accept it.

It is therefore important to understand what stands in the way of this realization. If we are enlightened, why don't we feel that? Why don't we feel we are God? Why don't we feel that we are a part of this universe? Why don't we feel the universe will take care of us without any effort on our part?

We create a barrier between ourselves and the universe. We feel we are separate. We are like the wave that thinks that it is not part of the ocean. Time and again, the wave is consumed into the ocean and rises again; yet it feels separate. We rise from this universe and we return to this universe and yet we feel separate.

We reinforce this feeling of separation by forming attachments. We form attachments to people, objects and events and build walls between us and others, as well as between us and our true nature. As long as we live in the world of materialism, which is built on the foundations of such attachment, it is difficult to break away. We create reasons for these attachments. A mother says, 'I need to care for my children'; an employer says, 'I need to look after my employees'; a leader says, 'I need to direct my followers.' These are games we play to postpone

the reality. All these happen automatically within the groups that we define as well as all around in the extended world around us.

An ashram, a spiritual community, allows us to let go of these attachments. The presence of a master and the company of like-minded people direct us away from external sense-based attachments. We move from attachment to the external world to attachment to the master. With the master's guidance, we learn to let go of that attachment as well.

An ashram does not insulate us from the realities of the world. The ashramites deal with many responsibilities to do with the outer world. They learn to be financially savvy and they are trained in skills ranging from photography and computers, to writing and sculpting. Yet, all these are underpinned by the understanding of learning to live without expectations of results and without attachments.

This is what Shankara means when he says that good company focused on the ultimate reality, leads to nonattachment; nonattachment leads to a state of no desires; such a state of no desires leads to an undisturbed mind; and an undisturbed mind leads to liberation.

The ashram community is a good place to start the journey.



Awareness, Not Achievement

15.11 The serious practitioner of yoga, with an understanding of his Self, can see all this clearly.

But those who do not have an understanding of the Self, however much they try, cannot see.

15.12 The light of the Sun, the light of the Moon and the light of fire, all their radiance is also from Me.

15.13 Entering into earth, I support all beings with My energy; becoming the watery Moon, I nourish all plant life.

15.14 I am the fire of digestion in every living body and I am the breath of life, exhaled and inhaled, with which I digest the four-fold food.

Krishna uses the word 'yoginah' in this verse. It is important to understand what He means by this. Yoga has become a buzzword; a trendy, fashionable word for cool people. I recently read an advertisement offering super-deluxe Kundalini Yoga that provides instant liberation!

I have never read about super-deluxe yogic practices in the scriptures. There is no instant liberation yoga mentioned in the scriptures.

Yoga is the link, the union, between the individual self, *ātman*, and universal Self, cosmic consciousness, *Brahman*. Awareness of this link, awareness that the self is the same as the Self, leads to liberation. The understanding happens in an instant; however, the practice leading to it requires a disciplined approach.

Patanjali, the great scientist sage of ancient India, describes the yogic path in his Yoga Sutra. Patanjali lays down eight paths to this union, the liberation, the

awareness that we are divine. These eight paths, the Ashtanga Yoga paths, are not eight sequential steps. These are eight parts, not eight steps.

The first path is *yama*, the spiritual laws of conduct. These are five: *satya*, truth in thought, word and action; *ahimsā*: nonviolence in thought, word and action; *āsteya*: not coveting what does not belong to oneself; *aparigraha*: living a simple life and *brahmacarya*: living in Reality.

In the Hindu tradition, when an ascetic is ordained in a particular lineage, he must take these five vows of spirituality and follow them rigorously.

In fact, each year I go with devotees on a Himalayan pilgrimage to spiritual centers known as the *cār dhām*. At the starting point in Rishikesh, on the banks of the holy river Ganga, each of them takes these five vows. For the duration of the journey, they are yogic practitioners, ascetics engaged in a sincere spiritual journey.

The second path is *niyama*, a set of day-to-day practices to keep one physically, mentally and spiritually clean and pure.

The third path is *āsana*, or body postures to facilitate meditation; today these have become synonymous with yoga. *Āsana*, also referred to as Hatha Yoga, is one of the eight paths of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga.

The fourth path is *prāṇāyāma*, control of breath or the life force. Again this focuses the body-mind upon the inner self. The fifth path is *pratyāhāra*, disconnecting from the senses, sense objects and sensory pleasures; again this enables focus on the inner self.

The sixth path is *dhāraṇa*, complete focus on a chosen object, to control the mind. Once someone can concentrate the mind on one object, the mind becomes laser sharp and can shift attention to any other object.

The seventh path is *dhyāna*, meditation upon the inner self.

The eighth and final path is *samādhi*; this is when awareness happens and union is complete. Through a sustained and serious application of these methods of yoga, a practitioner, a yogi, reaches the awareness that he is one with the universe. There are highly evolved beings who reach *samādhi* without any intervening process; these are rare cases.

In today's world, my opinion is that *dhyāna*, meditation, is best suited for spiritual progress and for the realization that one's self is part of that cosmic Self.

Krishna says that until that awareness happens, however much one may strive, one will not reach Him.

Understand, here we are talking about awareness, not achievement. The truth is that our individual self is an integral part of the universal consciousness, the Self. This truth is not something that we need to work towards. It exists. It is. We are blinded by individual ego, *māyā*, the illusion of our individual identity, in forgetting that we are part of the collective consciousness.

Yogis, sincere spiritual practitioners, lift this veil of *māyā*, destroy the illusion, to see beyond into the truth of their oneness with the Divine. Meditation is the path and technique to lift this veil. Meditation enables the practitioner to go deeper and deeper into himself. Meditation brings about awareness of what is.

Light is awareness. Light is the sustainer of life. The Bible says, 'God said, *Let there be light and there was light.*' Light is one of the first manifestations of the Divine in creation. Without light and heat from the sun, life as we know it would be impossible. Everything in this world revolves around energy received from the sun in the form of light and heat.

The sun is also the dispeller of darkness. Not only does Krishna establish that He is the creator of this universe - the solar system, sun, moon and the fire which sustain our lives, but He also tells us that He is the Dispeller of darkness.

Krishna, as the master, as the guru, is the Dispeller of darkness. Guru means one who dispels darkness. As the sun, moon and the fire, Krishna is the ultimate master who leads us into awareness.

Krishna is the destroyer of our *saṁskāras*. *Saṁskāras* are products of darkness, our unconscious. Darkness is not a positive entity. It cannot be shifted from point to point. However, it can be destroyed by light. The presence of light dissolves darkness. The presence of awareness destroys *saṁskāras*. Darkness has no existence of its own. It only exists when there is no light. We cannot create darkness. It is the absence of something.

When someone cannot see, he is not bothered by darkness. He is not afraid of darkness. To a blind man, darkness is his nature. A blind man will not say that he sees ghosts and spirits in darkness. Darkness is the state that he exists in.

A truly courageous man is also not disturbed by darkness. Someone who is not afraid of anything does not fear the loss of ego, loss of identity and death. To him, darkness poses no fear as well. He can equally handle darkness and light, without fear or attraction.

Other than these two classes of people, darkness poses problems and presents fears for everyone else. In the Ananda Spurana or Life Bliss Program, as well as in our Nithyananda Spurana Program, we have sessions where participants meditate upon darkness. This is a highly energizing meditation. It may seem surprising, but darkness is energy.

People have powerful experiences when they go into this meditation with deep awareness. One gradually loses the ability to sense: one loses all one's sensory powers, those of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. One loses awareness of one's boundaries of the body. Effectively the body disappears. Then thoughts stop and the mind comes to rest.

Focusing and meditating upon darkness can enable one to reach a state of awareness where the spirit is perceived. One realizes that body and mind as well as the senses can be lost, yet the spirit remains.

Some people, especially those who have lived in countries where darkness is more common than light during certain periods of the year, do not even see the darkness when they go into this meditation. People living near the Arctic or Antarctic regions, where there is no sun during winter, become accustomed to this darkness and have no fear. Such people, when asked to meditate upon darkness as a means to eliminate fears associated with darkness, do not perceive darkness as something to be afraid of.

In this sense, Krishna is not only the Lord of light, but of darkness as well.

Krishna further expands on His pervasiveness. In the form of light and heat, He is the Sustainer of all beings within this universe. He, as we have seen, is the dispeller of darkness, the dissolver of *saṁskāras*.

He says that He is the energy of the watery moon and through this energy He is the life energy within plant life.

The Taittreya Upanishad says:

‘Those who realize *Brahman*, the cosmic consciousness, as the ultimate Truth, see the Divine in their hearts. They are granted all the blessings of life. From this ultimate Truth, the etheric space materialized. From etheric space, air emerged. From air, came fire. From fire, came water. From water, earth emerged. And from the earth, plants were produced. The plants gave food. From food was created the human body, head, arms, legs and heart.’

Krishna affirms that He is *Brahman* and through His manifestation of the various natural elements of space, air, fire, water and earth, He is responsible for plant life and therefore for food and human beings.

Without plant life, there is no food. Without food, there is no body and mind. Body and mind become food for others after death. Food is an expression of divinity. The energy behind food is both the creator and destroyer of *saṁskāras*.

Most of us treat food as a basic necessity or an object of sensual pleasure. We ignore it or become addicted to it. We need to be aware of what we eat.

A disciple asked a Zen master, 'Master, what changed in you when you became enlightened?'

The master said, 'Now that I have become enlightened, I eat when I eat and sleep when I sleep.'

This may sound confusing. How many of us eat when we eat? How many of us focus on the food that we eat? While eating, we focus on everything except food. We talk, dream, read, watch television, fight and do everything except be aware of the food.

We treat food as garbage and it turns into garbage inside us. Once we treat food as energy, the life energy that it is, we experience a transformation inside us. Saying grace before meals as Christians do is a wonderful custom.

Before eating, offer gratitude to the universe for what you have received and meditate upon the food. Traditionally Hindus offer oblations to the Divine and chant prayers before eating. Major changes happen when you follow these customs with awareness.

To focus on what we eat while we eat is to be in the present moment. In the present moment, everything happens for the first time, afresh.

A master was instructed by his physician to eat bland food. The master's cook became fed up after a while and complained, 'I don't know how you can eat the same food everyday without complaining. I am bored cooking the same food everyday.'

The master said, 'It is not the same food. What I ate yesterday is different from what I am eating now. What I am eating now is not the same food that I shall eat tomorrow.'

A person who can be so settled in the present is one who is aware. He is one with Krishna.

The role of the sun as the giver of light and heat energies is obvious. It is also obvious that without the sun, all life forms will cease to exist. However, the fact that the moon is a nourishing energy providing life energy to plants and therefore to humans is not that well appreciated.

The moon controls our behavior, moods and minds. *Soma*, the name for the moon, refers to its fluidity and the transient nature of waxing and waning.

Krishna then talks about *vaiśvānara*, *prāṇa* and *apāna*.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:

‘This fire that is within the human being and which digests the food that he eats is *vaiśvānara*. The sound of this fire *vaiśvānara* is that which one hears by closing the ears. When death nears and the spirit is about to leave the body, he no longer hears this sound.’

This *Upaniṣad* goes on to say that neither *āhāra* (food), nor *prāṇa* (breath), can function alone, one without the other. Food will decay without breath and breath will dry up without food. Together, when the awareness of their union happens, true consciousness results.

Food is classified into four parts: Food that is chewed and eaten as with solids, food that is swallowed straightaway as with air, food that is sucked and consumed as liquids, and food that is licked and consumed. Food is also related to the four elements other than space: air, fire, water and earth.

The ancient Hindu traditional medicine system Ayurveda, works on this principle of *vaiśvānara*. The quality of this inner fire determines our state of hunger or lack of hunger as well as the state of health.

What Krishna implies here as well is that food is divine since it has His imprint on it. We tend to take food for granted. Only when food is scarce, is it appreciated and enjoyed.

Look around us; look at yourselves. How often do we value the food that we consume? A poor man eats his meager meal with great relish and awareness. The wealthier we become, the less aware and caring we are of what we eat. The underlying cause of most illnesses can be traced to this disrespect for food.

In traditional homes in rural India, even today, some food is offered to a crow or animal before the household eats. Often the household will not eat till a wandering mendicant or ascetic is fed. Offering food to others, other living beings, has been considered a form of worship in Hindu tradition. Food has always been considered the repository of the Divine.

A small story:

A teacher was teaching a little boy good habits at nursery school: how to sit properly at the table, fold the napkin on his lap, pick up the fork and spoon and so on.

As the boy was about to gulp down what was set in front of him, she asked, 'Haven't we forgotten something?'

The boy replied, 'What now?'

The teacher said, 'Don't you pray before you start eating?'

'No,' said the boy. 'My mom's a good cook!'

Q: Swamiji, you talked about yoga. Modern people practice yoga as a form of exercise for wellness. Is this wrong?

If someone wants to 'work up a sweat,' yoga is not the way. Yoga was not meant to produce a sweat or to be practiced in a hot and humid room. These are perversions.

Yoga trains the body so that the body and mind can unite at the being level. That is the only purpose of yoga. Yoga means 'uniting'. It is not even union. *Yoga* is a verb that signifies action and the process. It is not a noun referring to a goal or end result.

The physical part of yoga is one of the eight paths that help in this process. I was trained by a great yoga master starting from the age of three for several years. He was an instrument to prepare my body to hold the energy of enlightenment. It prepared my body for the rigors that I chose to subject it to in my spiritual quest.

People casually do *prāṇāyāma*, breath control. They play with it as if it is some bodily exercise. It is highly dangerous. *Prāṇa* is life energy. Improperly used, it can cause death. Properly used, it can prolong life. *Prāṇāyāma* can help you live without food and water or air. All this requires understanding, guidance and practice.

Our teachers teach Nithya yoga, a system of yoga developed based on the body language of Patanjali, the Father of yoga. Nithya Yoga is meditation-based and incorporates other aspects of Ashtanga Yoga, the yoga of eight paths, in a holistic manner.

Nithya Yoga is not about how well you perform a posture. It is about the intent with which you get into and out of the posture. The intent and the visualization of that intent translate into action. Your body moves with that intent. You need to make no effort. Nithya Yoga is about adding life to your movements; it has nothing to do with adding movements to your life.

Sixty and seventy-year-olds who never dreamed of practicing yoga, imagining themselves to be inflexible, practice Nithya Yoga. They find their body moving effortlessly; they are amazed.

In this cyber age, we suffer from cerebral pollution. The only solution to cerebral pollution is meditation. Nithya Yoga is built around meditation. This is the safest and most effective form of yoga that I know.



The Way Our Mind Functions

15.15 I am seated in everyone's heart and from Me came memory, knowledge and their loss. I am known by the Vedas; indeed, I am the creator of vedānta and I am the knower of the Vedas.

15.16 There are two things, the perishable and the imperishable, in this world. There are the living beings who are perishable while there is the unchangeable, the imperishable.

Krishna says that He is memory and He is knowledge. What does this mean?

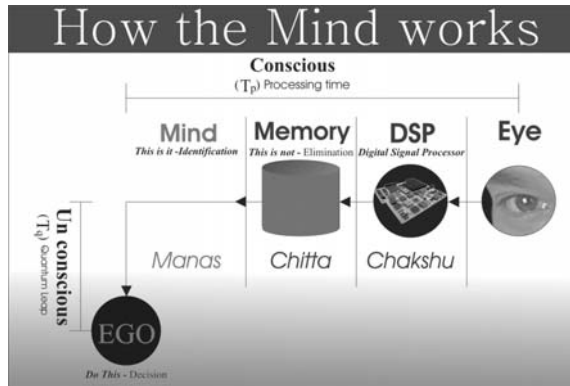
How does our mind work? How does it invent beliefs? We don't even know where our mind is. If I ask you where your mind is, you will point to your head. That's not your mind.

Every cell in our body has inbuilt intelligence. These cells constantly regenerate themselves. Therefore, our intelligence is always fresh, updated. It is not ancient. These cells make up our body-mind system. They are everywhere in our body. Therefore, there is no one place where our mind is definitely located; certainly it is not in our head!

How does this mind work? How does this collective intelligence of the cellular system of our body-mind complex function? Science has no clue even today. Science has no idea how senses perceive what they do. Scientists, neurologists, psychologists and others in the field can explain the physical pathways through which they think thoughts travel and say that this is the route our thought process takes. They have no proof.

The sages of ancient India described the process. They described it not in physical terms but in conceptual terms. Their description enables us to understand how the mind functions.

Let me show a diagram to illustrate how information that enters the eye is processed; actually, not just information entering through the eye, but information entering through any of the five senses, i.e., through the nose, ears, tongue, skin and eyes. As an example, we are using the eye.



Let us take the process of seeing, which is almost eighty percent of our total sensory perception. Your eyes see me now. In Sanskrit, we call this seeing power *cakṣu*. It is the energy behind the physical eyes; however, it is not a physical organ. *Cakṣu* is a virtual digital signal processor. Its output goes into our memory, called *chitta* in Sanskrit, as a bio-signal file. Memory starts analyzing the facts of the case. It compares the input it has received against its database.

Chitta acts as a filter. It excludes first. It responds based upon comparison and elimination, 'What I see is not an animal, it is not a rock.' 'Na iti, na iti,' 'not this, not this,' it says. The partly processed, filtered file then goes to *manas*, our mind. *Manas* makes a positive identification of what is seen, again by referring the file to its huge database. The mind then says, 'What you see is a human being talking to you.'

A computer is still not capable of performing this process of recognition of an object. The capacity required, even with today's huge computing powers and parallel computing networks, would be so massive and complicated that no real operating system exists that can duplicate even this one process of our body-mind system.

The object identified by the mind, *manas*, then takes a quantum leap to our ego as a file. This ego is similar to what Sigmund Freud and others described as the identity of the individual, where all experiential data is stored. However, it may not be the same definition that I use here that you will find in western psychology.

Our ego associates the file with similar memories from the past and decides what to do in the given situation. If we have had a good experience listening to the person we see, we stay and listen. If the data shows that our experience with such a person or someone similar has been negative, we leave.

The ego decides for us whether to listen to this person or not. We express that decision and act upon that decision. This zone of the ego is not under the control of our conscious, logical and rational mind. The ego continuously stores impressions, past memories, unfulfilled desires and various emotive reactions, whether we are conscious of these experiences or not. The ego never sleeps.

The unconscious zone is filled with negative memories and restlessness. All our past memories, which we call *samskāras* in Sanskrit, all our past thought patterns are stored in this zone as files. Psychology uses the word *engrams* or engraved memories to denote these stored memories. There are many files stored in this zone. Without any logical connection between them, these memories or incidents are stored here, in random order. And because of so many engrams we are restless.

What happens is that when the file takes a quantum leap to this zone where so much data is stored, the file does not even reach the ego properly for a decision. It is as if our hard disk is loaded with high-resolution photographs and there is only a little space left. There is no space available to work further on our hard disk. The computer stalls; it stops. In the same way, when our unconscious is loaded with past thought patterns and memories, it becomes inefficient and makes superficial and illogical decisions.

For example, according to data that we have collected, we know smoking is injurious to health; it is not good for our body. We hold onto this decision as long as we are on the conscious level. However once the mind takes the leap to the ego, the engrams just instruct us to smoke; we decide to smoke. The conscious process says, 'No, it is not good for health.' However, the unconscious process says, actually it doesn't even say, it just makes the decision and we execute it. It is a pure instinct-level decision.

This unconscious area is powerful. It can be used in three ways: at the instinct level, intellect level or intuition level. As long as the unconscious is overloaded with negative memories and restlessness, it works at the instinct level. We decide instinctively, unconsciously, just like an animal does. We make hasty decisions. When we are at the instinct level, we end up regretting most decisions.

Next is the intellect level. Here, we are conscious; we make decisions logically, but we don't have extra enthusiasm or energy. We are not creative or innovative;

we don't take big steps; we don't grow. We make decisions in a logical and conscious way, that's all.

When we are at the intellect level, we are not tired; yet we are not energetic either. We are in a break-even state. At this level, we do not use our potential to the maximum.

The level where we can actualize our entire potential is the intuition level. If we can infuse deep silence and awareness into the unconscious zone and replace engraved memories or files with silence and awareness, we are at the intuition level.

A small story:

A woodcutter was busy chopping trees at the edge of a forest. An enlightened master walked by and the woodcutter offered him what food he had. Pleased, the master blessed him and said, 'Go deep.'

The woodcutter advanced deeper into the forest the next day. He found a silver mine with rich deposits. Happily, he dug out chunks of silver, sold them and became rich.

Months later, the master passed by again. The woodcutter entertained him well. He was grateful for the master's advice that made him prosperous. The master left, once again saying, 'Go deep.'

The woodcutter progressed deeper into the forest and found a gold mine. By recovering deposits from this mine, he became very wealthy. He felt deep gratitude to the master and wished to see him to pay his tribute.

After many months, the master passed by again. The woodcutter told him all that had happened and wanted to share his wealth with the master. The master simply smiled and refused and as he left said, 'Go deep.'

Believing implicitly in the master, the woodcutter went on deeper into the forest and discovered a diamond mine. He became richer than the king of his country. He eagerly awaited the master's next visit to share the good news.

The master passed by again. Again he left saying, 'Go deep.'

This time around, the woodcutter became thoughtful. He reflected, 'There must be more to what this master says. There must be more than what I am able to understand. It is not the forest that he is asking me to go deeper into, perhaps it is into myself.' This time, with great awareness and the trust that he

had developed in the master, the woodcutter focused within and became enlightened.

The greatest wealth lies within, not outside. The greatest joy lies within, not outside. In the outside world, every experience of joy is followed by sorrow. Joy creates expectations and when expectations are not fulfilled, they lead to sorrow. When the search begins inside, expectations drop, attachments drop and a new joy happens. That joy is eternal, never ending. It is *ānanda*, *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.

Because we are unaware of this, we search outside for happiness, because that is the only way we know.

A small story:

One boy used to always sleep during the guest lectures in college. One day his friend asked him, 'Why do you come to the guest lectures? Anyway you only sleep here.'

The boy replied, 'I suffer from insomnia and this is the only place where I am able to sleep.'

Understand, like this boy who went to the guest lecture to sleep, we too go to so many places outside of us in search of happiness. We search for the right thing but in the wrong places. We have been conditioned that way. All we need to do is turn inward.

In his commentary on the Gita, Shankara says that memory and knowledge come from Krishna to those who do good deeds and loss of memory and knowledge to those who do evil deeds. The reference to memory and knowledge here is to the understanding of our true nature, the understanding and realization that we are one with the Divine, that Krishna is seated in our hearts.

Shankara concludes in his Bhaja Govindam:

'The true devotee who surrenders himself completely to his master sees divinity in his own heart.'

That is all that is required. Surrender to the master, surrender to Krishna. We shall then see Him.

Krishna takes Arjuna into a deeper understanding. Krishna talks about *puruṣa*, the principle of energy that underlies our existence. *Sāṅkhya* philosophy talks about *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa*, in one sense is energy, and *prakṛti* is matter. *Puruṣa* is the

unmoving, passive energy principle, whereas *prakṛti* is the active material principle. *Puruṣa* is the male principle; *prakṛti* is the female principle. *Puruṣa* is Shiva and *prakṛti* is Shakti.

Krishna goes beyond that philosophy. He says *Puruṣa* is twofold, one imperishable and the other perishable. He says all living beings are the perishable *puruṣa* and they are situated in the imperishable energy.

In earlier chapters, Krishna has covered in depth, these aspects of *prakṛti*, which operate through the mind, senses and the attributes, the three types of *guṇa*. Here, He expands upon *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is the ultimate energy from which all emanates. 'īśā vāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ' says the Isavasya Upanishad, 'All that exists is energy.'

The great scientist, Einstein became depressed when the findings from his theory of relativity and his discovery that matter can release energy resulted in nuclear bombs. He was shocked at the destruction he had unwittingly caused and turned to spirituality for solace.

When Einstein read this verse from the *Upaniṣads*, written possibly five to ten thousand years ago, he said, 'I felt proud that I had discovered that matter is energy. Many thousand years ago, these sages knew this, and also knew that matter arises from energy. The last step in science is the first step in spirituality.'

More and more, scientists are beginning to sound like the Eastern mystics. They no longer have the attitude of scientists of a hundred years ago who felt that they were rewriting the laws of Nature.

Now, with advancements in quantum physics, molecular biology and such areas, scientists find that there is little they can predict about Nature. The same experiment conducted in an identical manner by two scientists yields two different results. The people observing the experiment influence the results. Our scriptures said this over a thousand years ago. Shankara has said again and again that the seer influences what is seen. That was over a thousand years ago.

The primal energy principle, *puruṣa* is like potential energy. It is energy, but passive. It is the operating principle behind the entire universe. Without this energy, nothing will exist. Nothing will live.

Krishna says that there are two kinds of *puruṣa*: one is eternal and one perishes.

The *puruṣa* that perishes is the body-mind energy embedded in all beings, including humans. This energy has a definite, limited lifetime. It is always changing.

There is nothing permanent about it. It is programmed for deterioration and destruction.

The *puruṣa* that is *kūṭastha* is the imperishable aspect of this energy. It is the energy of the spirit that is indestructible. It is the soul that is forever, that which cannot be destroyed.

Krishna points out that primal energy manifests in different ways, as perishable and imperishable. Both are aspects of primal energy. One is destroyed and the other lives. One who realizes this difference and understands the true nature of *puruṣa* is liberated.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa says:

An arrogant scholar was very proud of his learning. He was a great *advaitic* (subject of non-duality) scholar and did not believe in the various forms of God. God came to him one day.

The mother goddess appeared before him in all Her splendor. She came as the primal energy, *Parāśakti*. The scholar was in a swoon for a long time. When he woke up, he shouted, 'Ka, Ka, Ka.' He could not fully pronounce 'Kali,' the name of the goddess whom he had seen. Words cannot describe the Divine!

Scholars argue endlessly about the nature of *puruṣa*, the various aspects of *puruṣa*, the difference between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. It keeps them occupied. It strengthens their ego. When the Divine presents itself before them, they cannot recognize what they see. Even Mother Kali has to produce her identity card before she can convince a scholar.

Q: Swamiji, you have explained so well about how the mind works. How can we use this in our daily activities?

Our mind functions in three modes. It can operate unconsciously at the level of the instinct. It can work consciously at the level of the intellect. It can work superconsciously at the level of intuition.

Our mind works at the instinct level when it is filled with *saṁskāras*, embedded memories carrying mostly negative emotions. These *saṁskāras* are buried deep in our unconscious, embedded there through repeated conditioning from childhood. At times of stress, trauma or pain, when we need to address issues with a clear mind,

these unconscious memories pop up and decide without our being even aware. The *saṁskāras*, the engrams, decide what we do, not our rational mind.

In the ten percent of cases where our conscious mind engages in decision making, we are confused by the choices. We dither and we later regret whatever choice we make through our intellect. No choice is ever perfect.

Do we have an option? Yes. When we decide through intuition, we can never be wrong. How can we access this state of intuition?

Intuition is the state when the mind is centered. It is what we call the present moment. Normally we are buried in past memories or speculating about our future. We are rarely in the present moment. Our mind is rarely where our body is. That is what thoughts do to us. Thoughts are the constant movement of the mind between the past and future. When thoughts stop, the mind is stilled.

Meditation makes thoughts stop. It is simple. During meditation one's awareness centers in the present moment, thoughts stop and intuition results. Whatever you decide in such a moment is always the right decision.

It is not even necessary that thoughts stop. It is enough if you stop following your thoughts. Once you learn how to witness thoughts without getting caught in their flow, your battle is won. Once you master this technique, you settle into the present moment awareness whenever you wish. There will never be a situation when you will regret the decision that you make in the present moment.

If every businessman and corporate employee learned to do this, imagine how many billions of dollars could be saved. And it's not just money that would be saved. The environment is being destroyed because people act from greed and fear out of instinct. If we act out of intuition, we can never act against Nature. Intuition is Nature.



Collective Consciousness

*15.17 Besides these two, there is the supreme **Puruṣa**, the Lord Himself, who pervades and sustains these three worlds.*

*15.18 As I am transcendental, beyond both the perishable and the imperishable, and the best, I am declared both in the world and in the Vedas as that supreme person, **Puruṣottama**.*

15.19 Whoever knows Me as the supreme, without a doubt, is to be understood as the knower of everything, and he worships Me with all his being, O son of Bharata.

15.20 This is the most profound teaching taught by Me, O Sinless One, and whoever knows this will become wise and his actions will bear fruit.

Krishna says that beyond these two aspects of *puruṣa*, the perishable body-mind energy and the imperishable spirit energy, there lies another level of energy that is the supreme *puruṣa*. He goes on to say that He is that supreme *puruṣa*, *Puruṣottama*.

Puruṣa is the energy that pervades us. *Puruṣottama* is the energy that pervades the entire universe. *Puruṣottama* in that sense is no different from *Parāśakti*, the cosmic energy. It is only a play of words to separate *Puruṣa* as male and *śakti* as female, while describing the ultimate cosmic consciousness.

Buddha says, 'The universe creates itself. There was never a time that the universe was not there. There never will be a time when the universe will not be there.'

The universe is imperishable. The energy behind the universe is imperishable. Krishna says that He is that energy, the *Puruṣottama*, that drives the universe eternally.

A beautiful verse from the *Upaniṣads* used as the invocation verse in many rituals:

*Om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate |
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇameva avaśiṣyate ||*

‘All is Fullness. From fullness, fullness results. When fullness is removed from fullness, what remains is still fullness.’

It refers to this aspect of what Krishna is saying. From the Infinite sprang this universe and many other universes.

Modern astrophysicists speak about many universes, not just one. They say there are millions of galaxies in each universe, millions of stars and planets in each galaxy. Even with the aid of advanced equipment, we cannot determine where the universe starts and where it ends. It will never be possible with material aids. The energy behind the universe is spiritual. It is intangible, invisible and immeasurable.

No proof exists as to how the universe was created. The biblical story of creation or the story of Brahma and *pralaya*, the great deluge, are metaphorical stories that essentially point towards a supreme energy responsible for the universe. However, the universe was always there.

The Big Bang theory does not explain how big bangs still continue if that was what caused the universe. For every big bang which creates new stars and galaxies in some part of the universe, there is a black hole somewhere else resulting in disappearance of stars and galaxies. For every birth, there is a death. Yet, how did the original birth happen? It never did. It was always there.

Krishna says, ‘Beyond the perishable and imperishable am I, *Puruṣottama*.’ He is not talking about the Yadava king Krishna, Vasudeva Krishna, son of Vasudeva and Devaki. He is talking about *Parabrahma* Krishna, the *Īśvara*. He is *Saguṇa*, the universal form and *nirguṇa*, the formless energy. He is that *Brahman* into whom both the soul, the individual imperishable Self and the perishable body-mind, merge.

He is the *Brahman* into whom the six-billion humans and countless billion living beings on planet earth as well as countless trillion upon trillion entities in all the universes merge. He is *Puruṣa*, the energy, and *Prakṛti*, the matter. Without Him, nothing moves.

We see *Puruṣottama* in different ways, depending upon our upbringing and capabilities. We see Him as the six-headed, twelve-handed Kartikeya or Muruga, or

the four-handed Balaji or the two-handed, peacock-feather-adorned, flute-playing Krishna. We see Him in a way that is comfortable for us to see Him, so that we can reach Him.

A great scholar and devotee prayed for years to Shiva to receive His *darśan*, His divine appearance. Nothing happened. One day, fearing that he may not live much longer, the devotee decided that he would no longer worship Shiva, but turn to Vishnu, who he had heard was kinder.

He placed Shiva's statue to one side of his altar and replaced Shiva with a beautiful Vishnu statue. He did not have the heart to throw the Shiva statue away, because in his heart of hearts, he still was a devotee of Shiva. He lit incense in front of the Vishnu statue as he started his worship.

He became annoyed when the incense smoke began drifting towards the Shiva statue instead of Vishnu. He stood up and covered the nose of Shiva saying, 'This is not for you. I don't pray to you anymore.'

The moment he did this, he felt Shiva's presence and had His *darśan*! He broke down and cried, 'Oh Lord! For years I worshipped you according to the rules. You never appeared. Now, I cast you away. Worse yet, I insulted you by covering your nose. Still, you appeared. Why?'

Shiva said, 'Only now you have felt Me as reality. You felt Me so strongly that you covered My nose. Till now, I was only a concept to you.'

To most of us, God is a mere concept, a theory. He is a convenient theory to hide behind, to cover our fears and anxieties and to show off our knowledge by expounding upon complex concepts and philosophies.

What difference does it make whether we call Krishna '*Brahman, Puruṣottama, Parabrahma, Prakṛti*,' or any other name? By whatever name He is called, He is the supreme energy who causes us to move.

It is the unbounded authority of Krishna, with which He declares Himself to be *Puruṣottama*, that makes Gita a scriptural authority. It is not the wisdom contained in it, nor the eternal truths, but the courage of that one person, who declared Himself to be the Transcendental Being, that defines this work as an eternal scriptural truth. May that *Puruṣottama*, that *Parabrahma* Krishna, bless us all!

Now, Krishna presents the great truths about His true representation as the collective consciousness.

This may surprise you or it may be something you already know. Irrespective of whether this concept is new or old, analyze this truth, internalize as much as you can, question it until your logic fails.

The first truth:

All our minds are not individually separated pieces of the universe. They are all one and the same.

All our minds are interlinked. Not only interlinked, they directly affect each other. They straightaway affect each other. This is what I call collective consciousness. Our thoughts are as infectious as our colds. People may escape from someone else's cold. A cold may not be so infectious; however, our thoughts are more infectious than a cold!

If we catch someone's cold, we may suffer physically for a few days and then get over it. When we catch thoughts from people, not only do we suffer mentally, the suffering is long-term as well. Anything we think affects people around us. Not only are those near us touched by our thoughts, so is everyone living on planet earth.

Understand, our intellect will definitely resist this now; we will analyze this later. How can this be true? We shall analyze during the question and answer sessions, one by one, inch by inch.

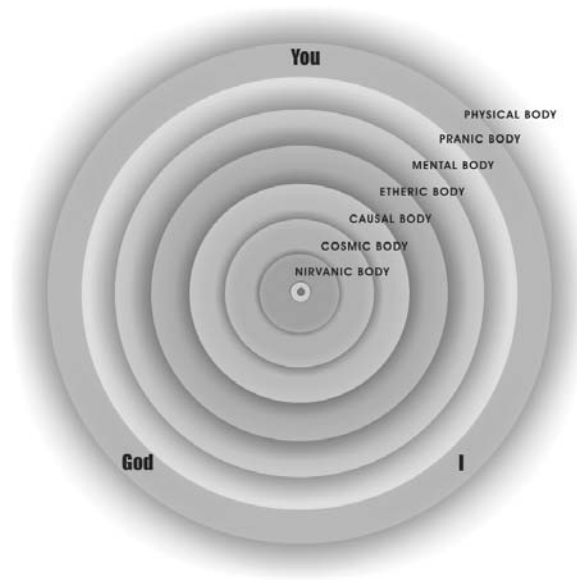
I have declared the first truth: All of us are not different beings, different minds. We are all totally interlinked, closely networked. Any of my thoughts can transform you; any of your thoughts can touch me. We are not separated individuals.

Please be very clear, we are not individual islands, separated from each other and uninfluenced by each other. Only one truth called collective consciousness links all of us.

The next truth:

Not only at the mental level, even at the deeper level of consciousness, the deeper we go, the deeper we are connected. Please refer to this diagram and I will explain.

There are seven energy layers of the body. The concentric circles represent the layers.



The first layer is the physical body, the second is the *pranic* body and so forth.

Now, in the physical layer, you, Krishna and I can be represented as three different points in the circle, quite far from one another, say 120 degrees from one another. At the physical level, the distance is the greatest.

If we come down a little to the *pranic* level, the distance is reduced. If we come down deeper to the mental level, the distance between you and me is reduced even more and so is the distance between you, God and me. When we travel deeper and deeper, and finally reach the *nirvanic* level, these three entities merge into One. Please be very clear, at the deepest point of all these layers, God, you and I are One. There is no distance. We become a single point.

Yes, it is difficult for the intellect to believe this and it will resist. Yet this is the truth. As I have said, nobody wants to hear the truth since it will transform us! Please understand that if we reach this inner level, God and we are One. We are God. God is us.

We all seem to be different entities at the physical level. When we love someone intimately, his love and suffering affect us. It comes and goes out of our being. At the deeper level, we don't have an individual identity. We are a part of collective consciousness. We don't want suffering, yet we cannot escape from it. Again and again, whether it is physical pain or mental suffering or spiritual bondage, we go through it again and again. This is because we are unaware that

we are part of collective consciousness. Once we become aware and realize that we are a part of collective consciousness, that we don't have an individual identity, we will realize that we do not have a separate ego to protect and defend.

We think we own our intellectual identity. In Existence, there is no such thing as a separate individual identity. Once we know this truth, we will go beyond pain, suffering, depression and disease.

Understand that as long as we hold onto the concept of individual consciousness, we will be continuously suffering, physically or mentally or on the being level. Why do we continuously resist nature? Whatever nature offers, we resist.

When the weather is cold, we resist. We think we are different from Existence. I have seen *sanyāsis*, enlightened masters, living in the Himalayas, living almost nude in the cold, in the snow. I have also lived like that, yet the body was never disturbed, it never had a problem. I never thought that I was different from the atmosphere, never had the feeling of separation from Nature. It is only when we think that we are different from the atmosphere, from the air around us that we resist it.

A very simple thing that we can practice now is this: If we are feeling cold, we can relax, identify the area where we feel cold, witness that area. In that area, don't resist the atmosphere, don't resist the air, don't resist the temperature, don't resist nature and don't resist Existence. Say to yourself, 'I am not going to resist nature. I am not going to resist the temperature. I am not going to resist Existence. Let me relax.' Be conscious and decide. With this, we shall see the body relax and the idea of cold will disappear from that part of our body; we become completely comfortable.

We may wonder whether we can extend this experiment to an extreme condition and check whether we can do this in snow and ice and resist the cold. The mind always likes to think of extremes. We can do it if we do it with totality. We don't have that much totality, that much clarity; that is the problem. If we can fall totally in tune with nature, we can be comfortable in extreme conditions. Many human beings do that and so can all of us, if we can be in tune with Nature. When we think we are something different from Nature, we are disturbed by Nature.

Famous medical institutions have conducted experiments with Buddhist monks who live in monasteries in the upper reaches of the Himalayas, in Tibet. One such experiment documents an initiation rite where aspiring monks cover themselves in wet clothes and sit in the freezing cold outside. These monks meditate to raise their

body temperature, which enables them not only to keep themselves warm, but also to dry their wet clothes. This is real. These incidents have been photographed.

One more thing, all possible bacteria and viruses are present in the air. At any moment a single virus or bacteria can cause a disease in us. But if we are totally in tune with Nature, if the viruses or bacteria go inside, they just leave us. We will not be disturbed. The moment we think that we are an individual body, separate from Existence, our whole body becomes our enemy.

You see, we are a part of the Whole. If we fall in tune with the Whole, the Whole behaves as a friend. The moment we think, discriminate or behave with the Whole in the opposite way, it acts like an enemy. Be very clear, the Whole is not here to kill or destroy us.

The Whole, the universe, is a hologram of which we are a part. Just as in a hologram, every part of the hologram, even if it splits off, reflects the totality of that hologram, we reflect the totality of the Whole that is the universe.

Another example is what happens when a person dies of drowning. The dead body floats. The dead body is heavier than water. Yet, it floats. On the other hand, a living body that is lighter than water, does not float. It drowns. Why is this so? As long as we are living, we are unable to relate with water. Our ego prevents that. Our mind prevents that. In the dead body, there is no mind and no ego. It is the mind and ego that causes our heaviness.

I recently read an interesting interview with a man who survived jumping into the Niagara Falls. Imagine someone surviving a jump into the Niagara Falls! If you have been to the Niagara Falls, you know the magnitude of the Falls. All kinds of journalists questioned him about this unusual and daring feat. This man said beautifully, 'When I jumped I became a part of the Niagara Falls. I felt I was a part of it. I never felt different from the Falls.'

When we are in tune with the collective consciousness, when we become a part of collective consciousness, Nature is with us, Nature is our friend and Nature protects us. Nature will not harm us. When we think that we are different from Nature, as long as we think that we are an individual consciousness, Nature protests against us. As long as we are in tune with the collective consciousness, Nature protects us.

Whenever we want to achieve social or economic success, we achieve our goal only when we feel in tune with the whole group. We must fall in tune with the collective consciousness. We will be resisted and we will resist as long as we feel

individual, as long as we have an idea that we are somebody, an identity. Whether it is home or office or workplace or industry, this will happen.

If we disappear into the collective consciousness, we are protected and taken care of. We attain complete success, not only socially and economically, but we experience it as well. It will be a feeling of fulfillment. The feeling will be inexplicable. The moment we resist, we make a hellish experience out of it.

A small story:

Once there were two ants sitting on the rim of a cup that contained *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality. As they were talking, one of the ants lost his balance and was about to fall into the cup. He somehow managed to get back on the rim. The other ant asked him, 'Why don't you want to fall into the cup? Even if you drown in this, you will become only immortal.'

The first ant replied, 'But I don't want to drown!'

We don't realize that merging with the collective consciousness will liberate us in totality. We resist and hold on to ourselves. As long as we do not disappear into the collective consciousness, we continuously create hell for ourselves and for others.

This same teaching is contained in Taoism, the ancient Chinese philosophy. Tao is about flowing with Nature. Water is the greatest illustration of natural flow. It flows with the landline. It flows around obstacles, smoothly, energetically. Tao talks about reeds in water that bend with the flow and straighten up once the flow is less. This happens when we do not imagine ourselves to be different from our environment.

Even in the physical layer, if we think we are something separate from our environment, we invite diseases. One more thing, if we think we are separate individuals in the mental layer, we sow seeds of violence. Seeds of violence are created when we feel we are individuals unconnected with others, unrelated to others. We become selfish, dogmatic, and violent. We turn into terrorists. With collective consciousness, we unify; with individual consciousness, we dissect, we cut things in pieces. Logic breaks. Intuition unites.

At the soul level, if we think we are individuals, there is no possibility of spiritual growth. Spiritually, we cannot even take the first step. First thing, at the physical level, we are not isolated individuals. Our bodies and the body of the sun are connected. A small change in the body of the sun can make changes in our body. A small change in our body can change the body of the moon. Even if we are not able to logically relate to this, it is true.

In the mental layer also, we are not alone. Any thought put into someone else's head comes and touches us, and any thought created in our mind goes and touches someone else. Any thought sowed by someone can touch and affect us. It is like ripples created on the surface of a lake. If we create a strong wave, we create an impression with our thought. We lead and inspire others with our thought. If our thoughts are not solid enough, other waves will impress us.

Either we live like a leader or we will be a follower. There is no in-between. We think, 'I will not be a leader. I cannot do that much. I will not be a follower either. I shall maintain my own stand.' This is impractical. There is no such thing as 'my own stand.' Either you lead or you follow.

At the mental level also, again and again, if we think we are individuals, we will be resisted. The moment we understand that we are a part of the collective consciousness, we will not be resisted; we will be welcomed and accepted.

The third truth:

At the ultimate level, at the spiritual level, the moment we understand that we are deeply connected, totally connected, intensely connected to the whole group, to the whole universe, not only do we experience bliss, but we really live, opening many dimensions of our being.

Right now we are stressed out and disturbed continuously and we need to think too much. With our separate body-mind, we need to think too much, we need to try too hard to enjoy life.

If we disappear into collective consciousness, we open many dimensions, many possibilities. See, now with only this one body that we have, it is a feeling of joy and we can enjoy so much. Imagine what we can do if we have two bodies? Imagine what we can do when we have many bodies!

If the multitudes of bodies increase, so does the joy, the bliss. This is our experience when we realize we are a part of the collective consciousness.

During the Nithyananda Spurana Program, the LBP 2, we realize that we are a part of collective consciousness. Not only are we a part, but we *are* collective consciousness. We are not an individual consciousness as we think. Layer by layer, when we go deeper and deeper, we realize that we are one with everything. So, automatically, diseases disappear. We feel well-being in our mental layer, *pranic* layer, *etheric* layer, physical layer and all other layers.

When we experience that we are boundariless consciousness, it is an unbelievable experience. It is difficult to imagine. I have seen people at the end of the program in such ecstasy that they forget their name, identity, social status, education, qualifications, wealth, religion, everything that they are and they have. They respect the other person; they respect everyone. They prostrate at each other's feet.

I have seen the father-in-law prostrating before his daughter-in-law! In India this never happens. This has happened at the end of the program because he sees the divinity in her. The mother-in-law sees the divinity in her son-in-law and touches his feet. Grandparents touch the feet of their granddaughter. The bosses or owners touch the feet of their staff or people working under them.

When we experience the feeling of oneness or collective consciousness, when we experience the bliss or experience of collective consciousness, we forget differences of name, wealth, social status and prestige; whatever we think of ourselves disappears. The truth of who we are is revealed.

I have seen that by touching the feet of their worst enemies, or people much younger or at a much lower economic level, people forget their identity. They are elevated spiritually. They experience a deep level of consciousness, such intense bliss, that their ego disappears. They see God in everyone and they are in bliss, in ecstasy, in collective consciousness.

They are not visualizing. When the experience happens, the whole group realizes that they are all One and the same. They understand that they are not different entities. Only when we experience collective consciousness can we say, can we realize and can we experience the meaning of the word bliss, eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

Krishna says, 'I am seated in the hearts of all.' He is in the hearts of all of us, all of you, every single person in this universe. The difference between the self and the Self, the difference between the imperishable and the perishable, are for the 'deluded' and 'confused' as Krishna says. Once one has the awareness of collective consciousness, there is no difference. Everyone merges into the collective consciousness.

The wave thinks that it is separate from the ocean. It does not realize that it comes from the ocean and goes back to the ocean, that it is the ocean. Just as the wave is part of the ocean, we are part of Existence. How can we attain or reach *Puruṣottama*, when we are already a part of Him? We can only gain awareness that we are a part of Him.

This is the profound teaching of Krishna. In this chapter, Krishna becomes the ultimate master. Arjuna is completely in silence, the best way to imbibe the master.

The master removes the ultimate cancerous tumor that happens to our being, which we call ego.

A master does surgery on that tumor. He never allows us to be stuck or comfortable with anything less than the enlightened state. Even when we progress spiritually, we get stuck in some layer. We don't know we are stuck and not progressing. In these situations, the master pushes us again and again to move forward. He transforms our whole life.

When we see the surgeon's knife, we think he will hurt us, but the knife of a surgeon is not for killing; it is for healing. In India, gods have swords and other weapons. These are symbolic representations of them as the surgeons who remove our ego. Goddess Kali has a big knife in one hand and a severed head in the other hand. The severed head represents the ego and the sword represents knowledge or wisdom that has destroyed the ego.

Let me narrate an incident that explains how the master takes care of the disciples and never lets them be stuck at some level. Even when the disciples feel cozy and secure, the master shakes them up and makes them aware that what they think of as security is actually just getting stuck and that they should move forward.

This is an incident from the life of Sri Ramakrishna, a great spiritual master of the nineteenth century. He had a master called Totapuri. Ramakrishna meditated on a particular form of goddess Kali. He lived life happily with that form. Suddenly, the old monk Totapuri appeared and asked him to go beyond the form of Kali and not to meditate on Her form. Totapuri was a master of *Advaita*, non-dualism, which is based on the formless reality that the individual is one with the Divine.

Ramakrishna was surprised. He said, 'The form of Mother Kali is beautiful; I feel totally connected to Her, why shouldn't I meditate on Her form?' Totapuri said, 'Forms are ephemeral; only if you go beyond forms will you experience the eternal bliss of universal consciousness.'

When we meditate on a form, we feel comfortable, we project our ego on that form and we feel satisfied. If we wanted a caring and loving mother, or if we are missing a caring, loving father, we can project that onto our God and think of our

God as a caring, loving father or mother. The more strongly we visualize, the more the visualization comes to reality.

Ramakrishna felt that what he so strongly visualized was reality. He was happy, yet it was not the ultimate Truth. Totapuri did not allow him to stay there with ephemeral happiness. He inspired Ramakrishna to go beyond form into the formless, which is eternal bliss. In fact, he forced Ramakrishna to visualize destroying the form in order to have the formless experience. Sri Ramakrishna did and reached eternal bliss.

The master makes sure that we are not stuck anywhere and that we reach the ultimate. That's why in the East so much importance is given to the master. The West only knows teachers. In the West, the idea of a spiritual master doesn't exist. In the East, in *gurukuls*, traditional schools that impart spiritual education, even the regular, non-spiritual education was given by spiritual masters, not teachers.

What is the difference between a master and a teacher? A teacher knows intellectually; a master knows experientially. A master has experienced what he is speaking, the truth. If Indian kings wanted to learn archery, they went to a master. You may wonder what enlightened persons know about agriculture, archery or business.

Every art and science has a technique. In the *gurukul*, at the age of seven, all children were initiated into meditation, which they practiced till the age of fourteen. If they had had their first spiritual experience by then, they studied Brahma Sutra, which imparted advanced spiritual truths, and took up a renunciate life, *sanyās*. Otherwise they studied the intricacies of life through the Kama Sutra and entered into married life.

Everyone was happy because they were properly guided by enlightened masters to live the life best suited to them. A teacher teaches through verbal language; a master teaches through his body language. It is known now that ninety percent of our communication is through nonverbal communication, through the body language. The direct touch and presence of a master transforms and awakens a person by creating such a space.

Once we see the master, he says we are not what we imagine ourselves to be. He tells us that we are not human beings seeking a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience. Not only are we not ready to believe this; we are also acutely uncomfortable with it. We feel he is preaching his ideas, trying to convert us. We become frightened and want to run away.

We want to be happy with our sheep life and be stuck with our regular things like wife, children, work and pleasure. After some time, when the master continues to give us the same idea, we stop resisting, but we are not yet convinced. After some more time, the energy of the master attracts us and we start remembering him. He becomes a part of our being. Still, we are not ready to accept what he says. We play a game of hide and seek.

At some point, when we trust him, he shows us that we are the same as him. He shows us that we can realize the truth and eventually be like him. Again we get frightened and act like a sheep. Then the master also acts like a sheep to make us comfortable, and make us feel that he is one among us. Once we relate to him and trust him, he forces us to experience that we are lions. This is what I call initiation, or the first experience. He forces us to experience that we are lions, but even after that experience, we again deny it.

After a long time, the master makes us experience our true nature and gives us the ultimate freedom. Then, only then, do we realize that we were always lions.

We don't have to become something new; we need to wake up and realize what we already are. The master never allows us to stop at any step before the full flowering. Again and again, he inspires and takes us to higher levels of conscious experience, until we realize we are that eternal consciousness, until we realize our true potentiality, the ultimate Truth.

A Zen story:

A disciple grew up with the master from a young age. He used to imitate the master. While speaking, the master always made a certain gesture by making a fist with the thumb pointing up. The disciple did the same when the master gave discourses.

One day the master took a sword and suddenly cut the disciple's fingers! The disciple had so much trust in the master that without a doubt, he felt that whatever the master did must be good for him. That trust transported him to a higher-level consciousness and he suddenly experienced enlightenment.

The other disciples asked the master why the disciple had to lose a few fingers to become enlightened.

The master replied, 'People lose many lives to get enlightened, so losing a few fingers to become enlightened is okay!'

Another Zen story:

A disciple asked his master for guidance to become enlightened. They were walking together on the third floor of a building, with the disciple following the master.

Suddenly, the master turned and pushed the disciple off the building. Again the disciple was so deeply connected to the master that he felt there must be something good in whatever the master did. He felt like he was floating. When he touched the ground, he touched heaven; he became enlightened!

Of course, masters use these techniques only with those who feel completely connected with them. They operate on disciples who have fallen in tune with them. This is the ultimate technique, the Zen stick that is used in the most loving, caring way. To the outsider, it may look harsh; however, the disciple understands the love and care behind it when the master uses it on him and is eternally grateful for such surgery.

The master never allows anyone to get stuck with ordinary experiences. Even though we call it a spiritual experience, it is only when we stop experiencing anything that we enter into a real spiritual experience. Only in such an experience, the experiencer, the experienced and the experience, disappear into one; all three merge into the experience. Only 'we' remain, even the word 'we' can't be used since there is no other, all boundaries are lost!

Unless that experience of *tat tvam asi*, 'That are thou,' happens, the master never rests. The master is the ultimate master surgeon who removes the ego at all levels, the ordinary or the spiritual. People have spiritual ego when they have a 'holier than thou' attitude. The master will never allow us to be stuck in that area. He pushes us forward until we experience the ultimate.

The more we allow his surgery, the more we realize the truth. A few people run away from the operating table during surgery; that's dangerous. Before surrendering, do all the checking, verifying, window-shopping. But once you surrender, allow him to work on you.

Let us pray to Krishna, the ultimate energy, the universal consciousness, the cosmic intelligence, to give us the experience of eternal consciousness; to make us beings with *jñāna cakṣu*, eyes of knowledge, and establish us in *nitya ānanda*, eternal bliss. Thank you!

Q: Swamiji, if we are interconnected at the level of the mind and higher levels, why don't we feel this connection? How do we get connected?

Let me answer the second part first. You do not need to get connected because you are already connected. All that you need to do is become aware that you are connected.

At the deepest level of your existence, at the *nirvanic* layer, you are one with the world and the Divine. This is referred to as the oneness of *jīva*, *jagat* and *Īśvara* (individual, world and God). You no longer feel that you are different from all that is around you. There is compassion for fellow beings, even non-living objects. This is the feeling that many who undergo Near-Death Experience have when they return.

You feel that the energy within you is the energy of Nature, of the universe and of the Divine. You are forever in bliss. You are not connected to one thing or another, but to all. Therefore, there is no attachment to specific objects, ideas and relationships. How can you focus your love and attention on one thing when you are already in expansion, covering all things and all people?

This is the *pūrṇa* that Shankara talks about, the infinite state of fullness that covers all. This is also the *śūnya* that Buddha talks about when the individual identity disappears, and the self merges with the Self.

How do we reach this? This is an easy question to answer as well as an impossible question to answer.

Each one of us, saint or sinner, is at the same distance from this awareness and the jump is quantum. It is an instantaneous and spontaneous awareness that happens. It is not a phased program in which you get certificates at each level and finally you pass the awareness examination.

All our Life Bliss courses open up a part of you and give you a glimpse into this truth. At the first-level program called Ananda Spurana program or Life Bliss Program Level 1, your energy centers are awakened and cleansed. You are ready for the glimpse, keen to move forward. At the second-level program, called Nithyananda Spurana Program or Life Bliss Program Level 2, where we take you through the seven energy layers, you get the experience. You get glimpses. At the level of Nithya Spiritual Healers' Initiation, you are initiated into a process that allows you to stay in this experience as long as you wish.

Beyond this your effort is needed. When your questions become a quest and your urge become urgent, you become aware. When you feel that there is no choice but to renounce everything else and surrender to that experience, you become connected to the ultimate Truth.

This is not a logical process; it is not a defined path. The path becomes the destination when you have the desire.

*Thus ends the fifteenth chapter named **Puruṣottama Yogaḥ** of the **Upaniṣad** of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.*

BhagavadGita

You And Me

CHAPTER 16

Human beings are born with divine nature inbuilt in them; they are not sinners! Yet, worldly conditioning turns them demonic. How do we become divine again? Krishna explains!



- ◆ *Swamiji*, would it be correct to say that even a demon such as Ravana in the epic Ramayana cared for his own kind and family and in that sense, had a measure of 'You' in him? Does that make him less of a demon?
- ◆ Great masters have created different religions. Yet, as you said, these religions move from love and compassion to control through fear and greed. Many of us do not know any route other than religion by which to seek God. What do we do?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, from what I hear, our default state is the divine, and we slip into demonic nature. Does caring for others keep us in this divine state?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, What is the meaning of the *mantra OM*?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, the cow is considered sacred and divine in Hindu religion. If it is based on *ahimsā* (non-violence), then no animal should be killed. Why the cow alone? Why not other animals?
- ◆ Based on our education, many of us believed that science had all the answers. Even when science did not have answers to what the scriptures said, rather than denying science and accepting its limitations, we denied what the scriptures said. Thanks to you, many of us understand the truth behind the scriptures.
- ◆ *Swamiji*, in order to achieve bliss, instead of being caught in temporary pleasures that only result in suffering, is it enough to drop anger, lust and greed?



You And Me

This chapter is traditionally called *Daiva Asura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga*, or the yoga of divine and demonic nature. Here Krishna explains the concept of *saṁskāras* (engraved memories) from an even deeper level.

In the 14th chapter, He spoke about *Guṇatraya Vibhāga Yoga*, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the three attributes of nature in which all living beings exist. These are the states of goodness, aggression and ignorance. He also explains the three layers of the body-mind system: *prāṇa śarīra*, *manah śarīra* and *sūkṣma śarīra*, which are the physical, mental and subtle bodies, respectively.

In the 15th chapter, Krishna speaks extensively about another body-mind layer, the causal body. That chapter is called the *Puruṣottama Yoga* or the yoga of the perfected being.

In chapter 15, verse one, Krishna points out how the body-mind system is centered. It is like a unique tree, with its roots in the physical world, and the branches in the causal world. He says:

The roots of this tree are hanging out in the open, in a known space, the conscious space. They also extend back into the unknown space, the causal layer. They go down as if they too are branches. The tree grows both upwards and downwards with many parts of it once again going into the unknown space.

Krishna explains that the leaves of this tree are the *Vedas*, knowledge. The words we use continuously in our being are in the unconscious space. This space is the causal layer of the body-mind system. He then teaches us how to remove the engraved memories in the causal layer, and how to program the causal layer towards bliss, towards eternal consciousness. This summarizes the teaching of the last chapter.

Here, in the 16th chapter, He moves into the deeper energy layers of the body-mind system and takes us to the cosmic layer. Let me explain first about the energy layers of the body-mind system as traditionally described by the Taittreya Upanishad.

The Taittreya Upanishad traces the flow of energy in the universe from its source down to its end uses. This *Upaniṣad* says that the primal energy is first expressed as the energy of *ākāśa*, or ether. The source of the energy is the cosmos, the universe, the Supreme, God, *Parāśakti*, individual Self, *Ātman* or whatever name you want to give this source.

Etheric energy is the first layer of this cosmic energy as it spreads out to the manifested world. It is the energy of space, the energy of ether. Do not think that space is empty. It is empty of matter, as we know. However, it is full of energy. As we know from Quantum Physics, matter is energy, and energy is matter. They can exist simultaneously both in time and space. Etheric energy is the largest available energy source in the universe.

If you were to place our solar system in a map of the universe, planet earth would almost disappear from sight even within the solar system! When you view our sun compared to a medium sized solar system in our galaxy, it would also disappear. That medium sized galaxy in turn would disappear when it is viewed in comparison to Antares, a star much larger but not even in the top ten rating according to size.

This gives a visual idea of the vastness of the universe. Our planet is insignificant. When I say insignificant, I mean totally invisible and insignificant, even within a small corner of the universe. The vastness of the space our universe occupies cannot even be imagined. In comparison, planet earth is smaller than a microbe.

The energy that pervades this space, this universe, this cosmos, is the energy of *ākāśa* - ether.

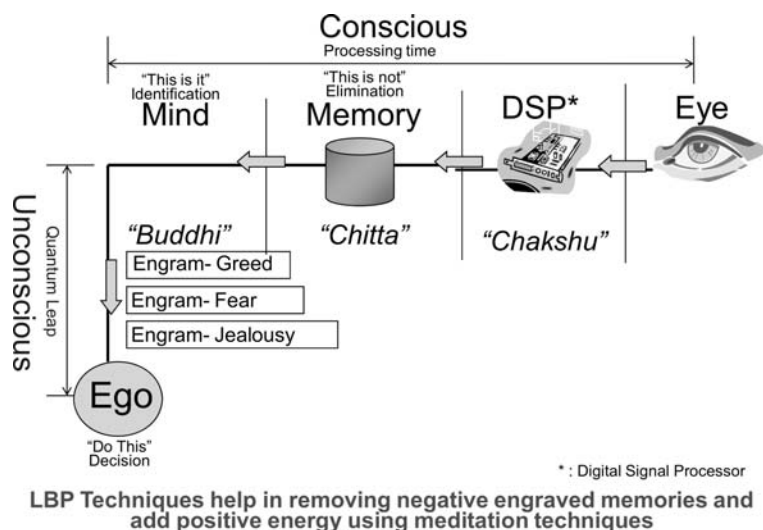
Krishna speaks about the qualities of the divine and the demonic. The beauty is that both these words have the same root. Of course, it is not accidental; both qualities are rooted in the same energy. It is just a simple decision. When you choose the word 'you', you become divine, and when you choose the word 'me', you become a demon. That's all.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, enlightened master of ancient India speaks beautifully of the same energy. No energy can be destroyed; your love can never be destroyed. It can only be converted. He says that as long as the calf says, '*aham, aham*' ('me, me') it must work, suffer, get beaten and tortured. Once it is killed, musical instruments are made out of its skin; then when we beat the instrument, it says, '*tumi, Tumi*' or '*tum*' ('you, you'). As long as it says, '*aham, aham*' it suffers, when it says, '*tum, tum,*' it starts being used for wonderful purposes like singing the glory of the divine!

This is a beautiful metaphor from colloquial Bengali (the language of West Bengal). Ramakrishna explains that as long as we have the idea '*aham, aham*' or '*ami, ami,*' (me, me), we will continuously be a demon to ourselves and to others. The moment the cognitive shift happens in us, that is when the '*tumi, tumi*' ('you, you') happens, we will be a blessing for ourselves and for others.

All the engraved memories, the *samskāras*, are stored in the causal layer. They operate without our control. Decisions are made without our knowledge. However, at the deeper level, in the cosmic layer, we decide consciously: you or me, divine or demon.

A small diagram shows how we make decisions, how our mind usually receives data and processes it, as well as how the cognitive shift happens in our being.



This is what Krishna explains at a deeper level.

You receive information through your eyes. For example, you are watching me delivering a discourse. The file goes to *cakṣu* (energy of sight), where it is converted into a digital or bio-signal file, so that it may be processed. The energy behind the eye operates much like a digital signal processor, converting the visual scene into information bytes, into a digital file.

The file then goes to *citta* (memory), where the excluding process of '*neti, neti*,' ('this is not, this is not') happens. There you understand that what you are seeing is not a tree, it is not a plant and it is not an animal. The *citta* part of the mind acts like a filter. It compares what it receives with what it has in stock, and filters out the possibilities of what it sees.

Then the file goes to *manas*, another part of the mind that starts to identify, 'This is it, this is it.' For example, it concludes, 'This is a man. He is wearing a saffron robe. He is taking a class.' The idea comes in this fashion.

Then the file goes to *buddhi* - intellect. This compares the file with your past experiences with similar situations or similar people. For example, the file now carries me as data because you are seeing me. So if the past experience with me has been positive, or whatever you have heard about me is good, then you are happy and *buddhi* writes, 'Yes.' On the other hand, if you feel it is a waste of time, or if you are not in tune with my ideas, or the time that you spent with me earlier was unpleasant, the *buddhi* writes, 'No.'

The file with all these notes, these additional pieces of information, then goes to the ego. The ego decides based on relevance, 'What is in it for me? In what way am I related to this scene? What will I gain from this?' If it will gain something, the ego says, 'Yes, let me sit here and listen.' If there is no gain, if the ego is not going to be enriched, the ego naturally says, 'No, I think I will move out from here.' Thus, according to the ego's instruction, we decide. Our body either moves or sits.

This is how the process happens. The ego is the point where we choose, 'What is in it for me?' Our vested interests come into play at this point. Please understand that sometimes the whole process will say, 'Yes, I will stay,' yet at this point, the ego may decide, 'My vested interest is being impinged upon.' If this happens, we will not stay! The rest of the mind may accept what we are saying, but if the ego is not ready, the whole decision will be changed.

Similarly, if the rest of the mind says, 'No,' and yet this part, the ego says, 'Yes,' we will decide, 'Yes.' Sometimes, when you are about to do something that is

immoral according to the social standard or according to your understanding, the final conclusion is 'No.' But suddenly your ego feels, 'I will be enriched by doing this activity, let me do it.' So you decide to do it. This is the place where you decide, 'You or me!' that is to say, Me or yourself.

That's the only small difference. When we make the decision of 'You,' we radiate divine qualities. When we make the decision of 'me,' we radiate demonic qualities. Actually, most people sit here because it strengthens their egos. At the end of this discourse, they know much more than others! They can tell others what they know. Many times, we sit and listen for the ego's satisfaction. So if we sit and listen for this purpose, even if we listen to the Gita, be very clear it will just create trouble for our being. We will not be helped in any way.

The decision about 'You' or 'me' is made in the cosmic layer. If we decide with the attitude of 'you,' the whole thing becomes divine; if we decide with the attitude of 'me,' the whole thing becomes demonic. The mind is neither negative nor positive; *citta* is neither negative nor positive. None of these, including the *guṇa* (attributes) are negative or positive. Even *tamasic* qualities, such as laziness, are neither negative nor positive. Many enlightened masters seem passive, not doing anything at all. We cannot differentiate between their attitude and laziness. For instance, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi sat throughout his life in one little town, Tiruvannamalai. He never moved out of there. He was mostly in silence. Yet we cannot say he was in *tamas* since he never made any decision out of 'me.' The whole process was happening with 'you' as a center, not 'me.'

We cannot call the *citta*, the mind or *samskāra* good or bad. In the superficial layers, they are neither. However, the decisions we make in the cosmic layer, in the deeper layer, determine whether they are good or bad. The energy behind passion and compassion is really one and the same. When we decide based on 'me', it is passion; when we decide based on 'You', it is compassion.

We need to understand one important thing. If we feel passion strongly in our being, but our compassion has only a little intensity, then our compassion is just a pseudo-expression, perhaps for the sake of name and fame, not for anything else. If we don't have compassion as intensely as our passion, all our activities are based on ego. Even this Gita discourse can become food for the ego, if the decision is taken out of 'I' and 'me'. When the decision happens out of 'You,' even ordinary daily activities can become divine, not just Gita discourses.

We need not work on the 'doing'; we need to work on the 'being'. Doing can never lead us to anything. As long as we believe that *doing* can lead us to the

Ultimate, we have *karma*. This is called *pūrva mimāṃsi* (those who interpret the *vedic* rituals literally). Only when we understand that only *being* can lead us to the Ultimate, we are called *uttara mimāṃsi* (those who interpret the *vedic* scriptures according to *vedānta*-based non-duality).

According to the *Vedas*, there are two major types of people: People who believe in doing and people who believe in being. People who believe in transforming the 'Being' are *vedantins*, people who believe that the transformation to the Ultimate can be achieved by 'doing' are *karmakandis*. Of course, the Ultimate can be achieved only by working on the being, not by working on the doing. If we work on the doing, we either suppress or express. We continuously fight with ourselves; nothing else is achieved. Only a man who transforms his being can achieve the Ultimate.

Whether to be a demon or divine, we decide at that one point. When we receive the data, process it and deliver the result or command, how is the command delivered? What is the center from which the command comes out? If the command comes out with the thinking, 'What is there for me, what is there for me?' then whatever we do, including meditation, will be only ego satisfying.

Many people ask, 'Swamiji, at some point, I felt such deep ecstasy in meditation, such beautiful bliss. But suddenly, within two hours it disappeared, it never came back! Why is this so? How can we get it back?'

Please understand that bliss is choicelessness. When we are absent, when our identity disappears, we experience bliss. The moment we want the bliss back, the moment we covet bliss, we have already chosen. We have made the choice! The moment we choose, we will always choose suffering. *All choices are suffering, because choice is based on the mind.* It is based on duality. Bliss is choicelessness. It is beyond duality, therefore there is nothing to choose 'between'. Bliss occurs beyond the level of mind and choice. But the moment we want to grab or have bliss, we suffer because we have dropped to the level of the mind, comparison and duality. Bliss can never be experienced this way.

When we are blissful, we allow bliss to possess us. The moment we want to possess bliss, we turn it into suffering. When we want to possess in order to strengthen our ego, the decision is from the attitude of 'me'. The moment the attitude of 'me' or 'mine' appears and decides, it destroys the bliss. We can no longer be divine. When we are blissful, we have said, 'No' to 'me'; we are relaxed in the 'You' idea. The moment we want to possess bliss, we have said, 'Yes' to 'me'.

We need to understand 'You' and 'me' properly. The word 'me' means ego; the word 'You' means the whole of Existence. When our identity evaporates, when our ego dissolves, whatever is left is Existence; it is divine. We create the demon by bringing in the idea of 'me'. The moment we bring in the idea of 'me,' whatever is there, is demonic. The moment the 'me' idea is removed, whatever there is, is divine.

With the 'me' idea, whatever we do, be it meditation, rituals, learning, or knowledge, it will only strengthen the ego. Anything done with the idea of 'me', whatever is done to strengthen the idea of 'me', naturally leads to more ignorance and suffering. Anything done with the attitude of 'You,' whatever it is, naturally becomes divine and leads to bliss.

In Sanskrit, we have two words: *nivritti* and *pravritti*. *Nivritti* - looking inwards or liberation - is centered on the idea of 'You'. *Pravritti* - looking outwards or bondage - is centered on the idea of 'me'. Whatever is done out of 'me', leads to liberation; whatever we do out of the idea of 'You', leads to bondage.

Ashtavakra says this beautifully in his dialogue with King Janaka:

*yadā nāhaṁ tadā mokṣo yadāhaṁ bandhanaṁ tadā ।
matveti helayā kiñcinmā gṛhāṇa vimuñca mā ॥ 8.4*

Where there is no 'me', there is liberation. Where there is 'me', there is bondage. Considering this carefully, neither hold on to anything nor reject anything.

As long as we are centered in ourselves, we are in the bondage of attraction and aversion, greed and fear. Most people are centered in their *mūlādhāra cakra*, which is the energy center in our body associated with the emotion of greed, or in the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*, which is the energy center in our body associated with fears and insecurity.

The *mūlādhāra* is all about 'me' - our possessions: 'What is in it for me? Where do I go from here?' The *svādiṣṭhāna* is about 'I', our identity, insecurity and fear arising from our need to protect the body-mind system. Both these bind us, block us, and keep us firmly locked in the material world.

As our higher centers of energy get energized and unblocked, and our energy rises from the *mūlādhāra* and *svādiṣṭhāna*, to *anāhata* (heart center) and beyond, we look beyond ourselves. The 'me' starts dropping. When the *ājñā cakra* (energy center between the eyebrows) becomes energized, the ego, the identity, the 'I' and 'me', disappear and the 'you' takes over. The demon becomes the Divine.

When we shed our ego, we become boundary-less. We are no longer limited by selfish thoughts about 'me' and 'mine', our kith and kin. The whole world is ours to care for. Krishna refers to this as *vasudaiva kuṭumbakam*, 'the whole world is one family'. As long as we feel that our body-mind is our boundary, that we are separate from the rest of the universe, we will continuously fight with Existence. We will continuously fight with nature, and we will be continuously fighting with the Whole. Please understand that the part can never succeed when it fights with the Whole.

Whatever we think, speak or do based upon the idea 'me', leads to more and more complications, more and more suffering.

Here, Krishna beautifully explains the demonic and divine natures.

As in chapter 15, in this chapter also, Krishna speaks. In earlier chapters, Arjuna spoke. Arjuna was expressing his ego, and a catharsis was happening. He was mad, confused, and vomiting, quoting everything he had learned. Slowly he came to the next level, allowing Krishna to speak, and the conversation began happening. Now in the 15th and 16th chapters, Arjuna is practically silent; he is listening. No questions, only doubts. All the questions have disappeared and only small doubts are left. He is asking for clarifications and more understanding from his master.

Q: Swamiji, would it be correct to say that even a demon such as Ravana in the epic Ramayana cared for his own kind and family and in that sense, had a measure of 'You' in him? Does that make him less of a demon?

When someone like Ravana or Duryodhana cares for someone or expresses love and positive emotions, their emotions and behavior also emanate from ego. Their identity, the 'I' and the possessiveness, the 'mine', drives them to such behavior.

Duryodhana was probably the most selfish person in the Mahabharata cast. All that mattered to him was name, fame and possessions. He would stoop to any level and commit any crime in order to fulfill his ambitions. Yet, his relationship with Karna seemed out of character. He gave Karna a part of his kingdom and made him a prince!

Duryodhana's act was not born out of selfless or unconditional love. He recognized Karna as a warrior who could beat Arjuna, his arch enemy, and so wanted Karna on his side at any cost. Duryodhana's relationship with Karna was primarily born out of a selfish motive.

It is the same with many others who seem to show a sense of care and love amidst a general trend of selfishness.

The truth is that, until they are enlightened, all human beings carry a mix of divine and demonic qualities. Everyone is a mixture of the attitudes of 'You' and 'me'. The 'You' arises more as you move towards *satvic* (goodness) tendencies, and the 'me' is predominant in the *rajasic* (aggressive) and *tamasic* (lethargic) tendencies. Just as a person has a mixture of these three attributes, each person is also a mixture of 'You' and 'me'.

The issue is how do we progress from the 'me' to the 'You', from the demon to the Divine. This is the purpose of life, if at all there is one. This is the core issue. As we shed our boundaries and grow, this transformation occurs. The growth is not external. It is purely an internal process. The experience is within. The expression is without.

We also need to understand where the 'I' and 'mine' come from. We think that the feeling of possession, the 'mine', comes from the identity of 'me'; it is the other way around. We are born with desires. They form the base of our primal energy. These desires drive us to acquire. These desires may be material, physical or psychological.

Even the infant needs nurture and care. It operates from its primal desire to live and survive. Its cries and other actions are meant to fulfill this desire. As the infant grows, its desires diversify. It needs varieties of food, clothing, shelter, entertainment, education and so on. As one desire gets fulfilled, another rises. But no desire gets really fulfilled.

The desires and fulfillment of these desires create the 'mine' - the possessions. Our basic desires come from the *prārabdha karma*, the carried-over mindset from our previous body. This is also called *vāsanā*. Our carried-over mindset from the previous birth decides how and where and as what we are born in this life. *Vāsanās* are the collective and cumulative mindset of our body-mind system from our previous birth. These are based upon how we lived that life. These are the unfulfilled desires with which we left the body in our previous life. Those desires do not go away. They follow us.

Not only do they follow us, but they also determine who we are in the next birth. Those unfulfilled desires constitute the 'mine'. These desires rise from the *mūlādhāra cakra*.

These desires and possessions determine our identity, the 'I'. Please understand, it is not the identity that gives rise to our desires and possessions and the establishment of 'mine'. It is the desires and the possessions, the 'mine', which develops the identity. You think of yourself, who you are, based on what you have around you. The labels that you give yourself at any phase of your life are based on what you have acquired or what has been thrust upon you.

This identity, the 'I' or 'me', resides in your *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*. This identity is your expression. The desires are your experience.

A Ravana, Duryodhana or a Hitler does not assume that identity of a demon by accident. No! They are born with that mindset based on the kind of life they led in previous lives. They had the tendency to become what they became. They came into this life with the mindset and the desires, and were born into environments that gave them the opportunity to become what they eventually became.

But this is not predestination. This is not irreversible. The desire to be powerful or wealthy does not imply that one must lead a demonic life. It is a choice that individuals make.

I have told you, time and time again, that there is no such thing as destiny or fate as far as all of you are concerned. These are mere escapist ideas. It is like people who claim that they have surrendered to me and yet they do not listen to me. Fate and destiny are useful pegs to hang our mistakes on, so that we can remain blameless. We say, 'What can I do? It is all destiny; it's God's will.'

Of course, it is God's will. This whole universe is God's will and so are we. However, God has willed that we use our free will. That is why He has given us consciousness, so that we are aware of what we do. If we truly believed in God's will, we would do our very best and leave the result to Him.

This is what Krishna said earlier,

karmanyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana

Do what you have to do without bothering about the results.

When we move into the space of 'You', we move into the attitude Krishna speaks about. When we are no longer worried about ourselves and we think of everyone else's needs as our own, results lose meaning. There is no selfish pressure. There is no identity that directs us towards success instead of failure, based upon how we imagine success looks. Success and failure lose their meaning. They become the same.

Whether we act demonic or divine, the inner space in all of us is divine. The inner space is pure; it is uncontaminated. Whether we are tuned inwards towards that purity or tuned outwards toward gratification is the choice we make through our free will. A Ravana had the choice of being a Rama, and a Duryodhana had the choice of being an Arjuna. Through their own free will, they did not exercise that choice.



Qualifications Of Divinity

16.1,2,3 Bhagavān Krishna says, *'Fearlessness, purification of the being, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity, and being centered on the being, performance of sacrifices, and accumulation of knowledge, austerity, simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault finding, compassion for all living entities, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty, studied determination, vigor, more forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, freedom from envy, and from the passion for honor, these transcendental qualities, O Son of Bharata (Arjuna), belong to divine men, endowed with divine nature.'*

Krishna lists a number of qualities that take us to a higher plane of consciousness; qualities that make us divine.

Now when we listen to these things with the attitude of 'me', what do we usually do? We start practicing all these virtues. Be clear that if we try to practice all of these qualities, one thing is sure: we will become mad. We will not be able to do anything because we will be fighting with ourselves. We will be controlling our senses to strengthen our ego. When we try to understand these ideas with our ego, with the attitude of 'me', we practice them to strengthen the idea of 'me', to improve ourselves and become better beings. Again and again, masters prove that they are not better beings; they are totally transformed beings. There is a difference between better beings and transformed beings.

The other day I shared the story of the lion and the sheep-lion told by Swami Vivekananda. It is a beautiful story. The sheep-lion does not want to realize that he is a lion. He wants to be a good, strong sheep. He asks the lion to give him a technique for becoming a strong sheep.

Similarly, if we start practicing these qualities listed by Krishna, we may have a stronger ego. That is why so-called *tapasvi* (ascetics, people performing penances),

people who repress themselves, have a strong ego. People who perform penances or repress desires, radiate ego. We clearly see that they do these things to strengthen their ego.

When we are completely blissful and relaxed, austerity happens. I have seen many *sanyāsīs* (ascetics), especially in India, who blame householders for not being pure, for being sinners. When we force ourselves to do penance, we continuously burn inside; as a side effect we often have doubts about our path and ourselves. This doubt causes us to continuously do something; we then make others guilty about the path that they are following.

We make others feel guilty that they are doing the wrong thing when we feel what we are doing is right. This happens particularly when people come to us and admit their wrongdoings.

Listening to confessions makes a person's ego strong. The listener feels strong. He feels that the people confessing are doing wrong, whereas he is pure. When we do penance out of ego, we want others to feel guilty and we want others to confess to us. We feel strengthened listening to others' mistakes. We feel strong when we address others as sinners.

Swami Vivekananda says that calling man a sinner is the only sin. Penance is supposed to happen naturally out of joy and bliss. Just as a natural thing. Anything done by force is not going to help us or society.

Society teaches us that we are sinners. First of all, this is not true. No enlightened master who has realized the divinity within is capable of saying this. Secondly, who gains anything at all by calling everyone a sinner?

If a religious organization convinces people that they are sinners, that organization can control people. Unless an organization controls people, it cannot survive. There are only two methods that an organization can use to survive and grow - greed and fear. Either it attracts people by instilling greed in them, or makes them afraid by instilling fear.

Religions try both methods. They say that if we do this, we will be rewarded; we earn merit points and when we earn merit points, we go to this place called heaven. In heaven, we will be taken care of. We will not need anything. The picture of heaven painted by some religions is fantastic. All kinds of wine, women and songs will be provided if we do as the religious leaders say.

Some sects sell VIP (Very Important Person) passes that guarantee heaven after death! People pay huge sums of money for these. It is like people booking their final resting places with scenic views! They build superb cemeteries, which will have sea-view sites, hill-view sites, swimming pool-view sites and so on. You can be buried in these vaults and you can enjoy all these views.

You may laugh, but this is true. It happens around us every day. Like monkeys we are made to dance to someone else's tune - through sheer greed. The offer of such a wonderful opportunity after death is powerful because it is a realm of the unknown. The fear of what is going to happen after death, makes you listen to such nonsense.

Religions lay down regulations and commandments that we must not violate. If we violate these commandments, God will punish us and throw us into hell.

Krishna tells us to be without fear and greed. He also says to be without anger. He says to be truthful, simple, meek, gentle, non-violent, and to be without expectations and to renounce. These are qualities of the Divine; these are qualities that you express when you are focused not on your own self but on others. These are qualities that arise from the heart and not from the mind. These are qualities that arise from love and not from desire.

God, the very idea of God, should evoke love, not fear. God in any religion should be portrayed as compassionate. No enlightened master has experienced otherwise or expressed otherwise. The concept of a fearsome God with vengeance is a manmade myth. It is created by man, to set one man against another, to divide, control and conquer.

Man has devised sophisticated methods whereby you can commit sin and still be redeemed. He is told that he has sinned. Now that he is a sinner, he is asked to pay a particular institution to absolve him of his sins.

The cycle is endless. We commit sin, we pay, we are absolved of sin, and then we can go and sin again. So, we feel we cannot go wrong in this life or in any other life, or even if we do not believe in life after death, in whatever state we happen to be after death.

All this is nonsense. There is no hell or heaven. They exist only in our mind. We are conditioned to believe in them because this is the easiest way to control us, through fear and greed. The greatest fear of any religion is that we might start thinking for ourselves. Worse still, they are afraid that we may stop thinking, and drop our mind! Religions fear this because then we will be liberated and no one will be able to control us. We will have become our own master.

The saddest part is that religions say that we are born sinners. I can at least understand it if someone calls an adult a sinner because he is more exposed to the ultimate truths. The very lack of awareness that we are divine, in my opinion, is a sin; that is the original sin. When we got into thinking and started clutching onto our thoughts, we became ignorant. If at all there is an original sin, it is that – the clutching onto our thoughts. Conditioning makes us logical, it makes us sinners. We can accept that. However, what of a newborn infant? By what right can anyone claim that a newborn is a sinner? Especially if they do not believe that there is life after death!

So, do we assume that this sin comes from Nature, Existence or God? Does this mean that God is the Creator of sinful beings? What kind of a God is that? Why are such things promoted? All this is done to control others through fear and greed.

Do we seriously think that God has no other job except to lay down rules and regulations about what we should do and not do? After that, He still has more time, so He watches everybody to see whether they are observing or breaking rules!

God resides in you and me. We know everything that we do. When we do wrong, we know. No one has to tell us. That becomes our sin. The guilt makes our life hell, nothing else.

When we are free and liberated, we are in sheer enjoyment and we are in heaven. Watch a young child. Do we ever see him depressed and unhappy unless tortured by elders? When he is left free, he is really free. Children can be wild and they should be left wild. They explore with no inhibition. They are God-like and always in heaven. Anyone who calls a child a sinner is the biggest sinner.

As we grow, we are conditioned by others and we absorb their values, the society's value system and beliefs. We stop believing in our own inner being; we lose that inner child, that magical and miraculous child, and we become an adult. We start being led by our nose, by rules and regulations, by concepts of sin and 'me'.

If instead, we focus on others, on 'You', we expand. In fact, the more we focus on our inner awareness, the more we open up to others. We move from the 'me' to 'You.' As we move inwards, our higher intelligence awakens. Our higher intelligence is nothing but the Divine. That awareness alone makes us God.

Please understand that what we think of as God is not an old bearded man sitting on the clouds, playing on a harp! God is merely that energy of inner and higher intelligence. That same intelligent energy that is within us also drives the entire universe. The energy that powers us is the same energy that powers the sun. There is no difference at all.

As human beings we have the opportunity to expand into this energy, into this higher intelligence. Unfortunately, animals do not have this ability, this consciousness. Humans do. To ignore this gift, this opportunity, this consciousness, is our original sin. The entire meaning of our life is to discover this truth and become divine. That is why, if we die without realizing this truth, we are born again.

We go through this cycle of life and death again and again because we do not recognize who we are. As Buddha says, that is the cause of our suffering. When we realize our own Self, our true divine potential, we realize the meaning of our life, and there is no need to be born again. We become liberated.

Q: Great masters have created different religions. Yet, as you said, these religions move from love and compassion to control through fear and greed. Many of us do not know any route other than religion by which to seek God. What do we do?

This is a thought-provoking question that all of you must think about.

The great masters who founded the major religions were enlightened. They experienced and expressed the Divine. Over time those who followed them turned demonic. That is the truth.

Spirituality is the creation of masters. Spirituality is about our well-being. It is the root of our holistic well-being. This includes material well being, physical, psychological, mental, emotional, as well as relational and spiritual well-being. Spirituality is not just some intangible concept. These great masters never had any concern about their own well-being; they only addressed your well being.

For many years after Buddha's death, based upon his own injunction, there were no idols or pictures representing Buddha. A Bodhi tree represented him. However, about 500 years after his death, followers started making pictures and idols of him. Now, there are thousands of temples dedicated to the master who did not go by the concept of temples. This is despite the fact that Buddhism follows its founder's teachings more closely than most religions.

Once religions become institutionalized, they tend to become commercialized. They need methods to survive. The most basic tool of survival is control through fear and greed.

We can reject organized religion and seek God. We can go to a temple and see God without the need for a priest. Or if we prefer, we can relate to God at home, or wherever we choose. We do not have to submit to the pressures of any institution.

God is always available for help, but we never ask. Jesus says, 'Knock and the door shall be opened unto you, ask and it shall be given.' But we never ask, we never knock on the door, and we go on missing immense good that can be ours just through the asking.

I say to you that there is no need to even knock. His door is always open. All we need to do is take that step to enter. That is all.

God is always standing behind us, just like our shadow, but we go on searching for money, power and prestige. We never look at the subtle presence of life that surrounds us. We never look within, where it burns like a flame.

That is why we never look into someone's eyes; we avoid them. There is a subtle contract among human beings all over the world to never look into each other's eyes for more than three seconds. It is strange that this is so in all cultures. Looking into someone's eyes longer than a few seconds is called staring and is considered impolite. It is thought to be uncivilized and rude, unless you are intimate with that person, unless you are in love with that person. However, even when people are in love, they do not look into each other's eyes as windows to the Divine; they look into each other's eyes just for bodily, sexual energies.

Our eyes express everything about us: our body, physiology, psychology, and also our spirituality. Our eyes are our windows: People can look through them to our deepest core.

In our Bhakti Spurana Program, BSP, there is a meditation where two people look into each other's eyes for thirty minutes. Ask those who have been through this experience about what it taught them. They are deeply moved. They look into another person's eyes, in most cases someone they have just met at that program, for a full thirty minutes. They discover themselves during this process. Not only do they learn about the other person, they learn about themselves. The 'me' in the person gradually melts and transforms into 'You.'

BSP is for those who have undergone the first few levels of Life Bliss Programs such as the ASP and NSP. BSP introduces the master, inculcates the understanding of the master and explains the possible relationships with the master. All meditations in the BSP help you drop your mind, your ego. By dropping the mind, we find the master and the Divinity within ourselves.

Look deeply into a flower and you will find God. Look deeply anywhere and you will find God. God simply means the depth of things. Whenever we are in contact with the depth of things, immense energy becomes available to us.

In fact, we start seeking God only when God has already started seeking us. We move towards God only when God has stirred in the deepest core of our being. We are so unaware; that is why we think that it is *our* desire to seek and know the truth. We are so small that we can't have that great a desire! Understand that. When we are small, our desires are bound to be small.

People seek God only when God starts seeking them, although they think that *they* are seeking. Only finally, at the highest stage of meditation, do they become aware of the phenomenon that their whole understanding has been foolish. It was God seeking them, and that is why they started seeking God. However, God is always the one who takes the initiative.

It is the same with masters. They seek out disciples. It is not disciples who are in search, but masters who seek out the disciples.



You Are A Demon If...

16.4 Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness or cruelty, and ignorance - these qualities belong to those born with demonic nature, O Son of Pritha

16.5 The transcendental qualities are conducive to liberation, whereas the demonic qualities make for bondage. Do not worry, Pandava, you are born with divine qualities.

16.6 Partha, in this world there are two kinds of created beings, one is divine and the other, demonic. I have explained at length to you the divine qualities. Now hear about the demonic qualities also, so that you will understand and live your life blissfully and happily.

16.7 Persons with demonic nature do not know what is bondage and what is liberation; nor what is cleanliness; truthful behavior is not in them.

What is demonic nature? Krishna says that all actions done out of arrogance, out of pride, out of ego, for name and fame, and for power, are demonic in nature. As in the case of Ravana, they benefit neither the person himself nor others. Their actions are performed out of ignorance, and ultimately lead to their own downfall.

I have seen many people do penance like Ravana (King of Lanka who abducted Rama's wife Sita, in the Indian epic, the Ramayana). Ravana did penance; however, his powers neither helped him nor others. He became a demon for others and for himself. He killed others, and finally destroyed himself. His penance was done with the attitude of 'me' and 'what is there in it for me?' The whole story happened to strengthen the 'I' and 'mine'. Please understand that whatever we do, whether we study the scriptures, do charity or social service, or perform *pūjā* (prayer), rituals or meditation, if they are done to strengthen the 'I' and 'mine', they always lead to suffering.

Focusing on the 'I' is instinctive. It is a call for survival. It is a call for our survival based on our conditioning and insecurities. The instinct to survive is what is called 'I', and the instinct to possess is what is referred to as 'mine'. The person who understands that both are illusions is an aware person. Such a person realizes that the instinct to survive does not help, and no matter what one may have, one still cannot survive forever.

The instinct to survive is pure illusion. At the most we can survive perhaps for 70 to 80 years. Sometimes a person lives to be 90 to 100 years with the same identity. Yet the instinct to survive tries to extend itself. It wants to make life eternal. No one wants to die. Naturally we are then walking towards suffering. As long as we carry this instinct to survive, we repeatedly hurt ourselves.

This morning an *ashramite* complained that she is hurt by small and well-meaning criticisms from others. She said she is sensitive. I asked her to stop using that word. I said, 'You are not sensitive. A sensitive person is porous; he allows the words to pass through him. Only arrogant people get hurt. If we are hurt, please understand that we are arrogant. We are impenetrable like stone, which is why words come and hit us. Don't say that you are sensitive.'

A sensitive person lets words pass through him. He never suffers. Suffering is from arrogance, never from sensitivity. A person who is sensitive never suffers. We suffer from words when we stop them, when we resist them, when we make our own meaning out of them. When we do not make meanings out of words, we do not suffer. It is like playing with words. We choose nice words to support our ego. We do not say, 'I am hurt because I am arrogant.' We use polished words such as, 'I am hurt because I am sensitive.'

Please don't cheat yourself with words. Let straight words be used. I hear many polished words around the world. People easily cheat themselves with such words. Don't cheat yourself with polished words. Let things be straight and clear. We can use polished words to cheat others, but let us please not use them to cheat ourselves.

Let me tell you a small story...

A contractor wanted to donate a sports car to an official.

The official refused, saying, 'I am an honest person and I cannot think of accepting this gift.'

The contractor asked him, 'In that case, how about if I sell this car to you for ten dollars?'

The official replied immediately, 'In that case, I will buy two cars!'

Be clear and do not play with words. Let us not cheat ourselves with words.

Let us be clear about what we mean. Let us use the same honest words to express what we really are and what we really feel. Ramakrishna says, 'Let your words and mind be straightened.' Whatever is, let it be expressed with straight words. At least we will know that we have a problem. When we use colorful, polished words, by and by, we forget we have a problem. When we play with words we forget that we have a problem. And this is very dangerous.

Understand, when we know that we don't know, at least we know that we don't know. When we don't know that we don't know, then we don't even know that we don't know! We then have a problem. Be very clear. At least let us know that we have a problem.

Let us use straight words. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. To achieve anything, the shortest way is straightforwardness. Nothing else can work.

Here Krishna gives all the divine qualities, one by one. It is not necessary to explain all the qualities. Let us take a few. Let us take fearlessness, for example.

As long as we carry the instinct to survive, we have fear. Fear can never be taken away from our being, as long as we want to survive. Surrendering to Existence, surrendering to death is the one and only way to achieve fearlessness.

There is a beautiful *Upaniṣad* (part of the Hindu scriptures), the Kathopanishad, that you must read. It is from the wonderful system of *vedānta* (essence of the *Vedas* including the *Upaniṣads*), founded by the *vedic ṛṣis* (sages). They have gone deep into the science of death. The West has dedicated its entire energy to understand life, whereas the East has dedicated its energy to understanding death! That is why *ṛṣis* live even after they die. They live after death, too. They exist; they discovered the art of living even after death. However, people who are caught in the material world die each moment, even as they live. This Kathopanishad is the science of death.

There is a beautiful story of a young boy, Nachiketa, who goes to the abode of Yama, the Lord of death. Yama was not there when Nachiketa went to meet Him; His servants try to receive him, but the boy insists on waiting for Yama. Yama

receives him after three days. Yama welcomes him. At this point, we must understand that no one goes to Yama's abode; only *He* comes to our abode! Always it is He who comes! When we try to escape from Him, He is death as we know it ordinarily; He will take away our 'I' and 'mine' - all our possessions and relationships; we cannot sign our check or drive our car once He takes us. We cannot have our relations anymore. Whatever we think is ours will be taken away: wealth, relationships, bank balance, everything. What we think is 'I' - the body, even that will be taken away. When death comes to us, everything is taken away. On the contrary, when *we go to death* like Nachiketa did, fearlessly, death welcomes us! Yama becomes our host!

In this story, Yama receives Nachiketa with love and care. First thing: He becomes a loving host. Next, He offers him three boons. Nachiketa first asks for good relationships. He says, 'When I go back to my family, my father should accept me, love me and take me back.' Yama blesses him with good relationships. After that Yama blesses him with wealth, and shows him how to create wealth, pleasure and comforts. Now Yama is behaving like a God. First He behaved like a loving host, and then He behaves like a God. Ultimately, Yama gives him *ātmajñāna* - knowledge of the Self; Now, He is behaving like an enlightened master himself! The third boon he gives because Nachiketa asks Him for the secret of death. Pleased with the boy's sincerity and courage, Yama blesses him with enlightenment itself.

Look at the paradox of life: When we run away from death, Death or Yama chases us, wherever we are. Death takes away all our wealth, our relationships, whatever we think of as 'I' and 'mine'. But here, with Nachiketa, the whole situation is just the opposite! When we surrender to Yama, when we go to Him, He is a loving host. He is not something terrible as we imagine Him to be. We always portray Yama as a huge form, black in colour, with a big moustache, traveling slowly on a buffalo, with a rope in His hands and with a terrible, arrogant and egoistic demeanor!

Here the whole scene is different. He says, 'Welcome! You are the form of *Agni*, fire.' A guest is considered to be the form of fire that we worship.

The *vedic* culture says, '*Atithi devo bhava*' - the guest is God. In *vedic* culture, the guest or *atithi* is respected as God. *A-tithi* means a person who arrives without telling us in which *thiti* (time or date) he will come. Not the person who sends us an email, then a phone call, a fax, and then expects that we pick him up at the airport! Such a person is not an *atithi*. No! He is our relative! We must take care of him. He must be received; it is pure business. But *atithi* is different.

Please understand that all our relationships are more or less business relationships. *Atithi* means a person who comes straightaway into our lives with an openness. The big problem is, today the *atithi* concept is lost. People cannot believe that in Indian villages, the doors of all homes are kept open in the daytime. At least in the village in which I was brought up, all the doors of all the houses were open. I could go to any home on that street and eat. A child can go to any house and eat! The very idea of *atithi*, the unannounced guest, has disappeared in most places. When people call India a poor country, I tell them, 'No. You don't know the value of Indian culture.'

For example, when we travel to a developed country and go to a new city for business purposes, how much can we afford to spend on hotels and lodges? On the contrary, at least in India, if we have one friend, just a phone call is enough, and all arrangements are taken care of! There too, due to the cultural invasion, this hospitality is diminishing. At least in the villages where *vedic* culture is alive, this *atithi* culture is alive. *Atithi devo bhava* is where we respect any guest as God.

Yama tells Nachiketa, 'You are my guest and you have come to my house in the form of '*vaiśvānarāgni*' (the fire that we worship). The (priest) is considered to be the embodiment of *Agni*, the divine *Agni*. You have come to my house as the embodiment of the Divine. You are here. Let me pay my respects to you. I was not here to receive you when you arrived. Please forgive me for not being here for three days to receive you.'

Usually we postpone *Yama* (death). Usually we try to escape from Him. But when we go in search of Him, He will not be there, as we feared! That is the essence of this whole story.

Usually He chases us. We run away from Him, and He is behind us! But when we turn and go towards Him, we suddenly find that He is not there! For three days, Nachiketa could not find Yama. Understand this important point. This story is significant; it has a tremendous truth. When Nachiketa went to Death, Death was not there. This means when we turn towards death, we will not find death as we imagined it to be. Whatever imagination we have about death will not be there when we surrender to death. Now, because of our fear, we try to escape; because we try to escape, He chases us.

It is like a vicious cycle. If we understand that, at the moment we surrender, He will not be there as we imagined Him, as we expected Him to be, we will get tremendous courage. That courage makes us face Him more clearly. When we face

Him more clearly, we get more courage. When we follow this circle, it is called a virtuous circle; what we experience presently is the vicious cycle. Let us turn our vicious cycle into a virtuous circle.

If we can understand this Kathopanishad story, our whole idea of death will be transformed. First of all, when we seek Him, He is not there. Second, when He appears He is not as we imagined Him to be. Rather than being an arrogant, terrifying form, waiting to take our possessions, He is a humble host, welcoming us graciously. He then behaves like a God and blesses us with relationships, wealth and ultimately *ātmajñāna*, knowledge of the Self, enlightenment.

We may ask how to go towards death, for example, 'Should we commit suicide?' Please understand that committing suicide is not facing death. Be very clear that people who commit suicide are not fearless. They are the most cowardly people. They commit suicide because they are unable to live this life. Rather than facing death, they escape from life. Suicide is not facing death but escaping from life. Escaping from life is one thing; facing death is another. These two are very different from each other.

When fear is created in our system or when fear happens, the only way to face the fear is to just go through it. Don't allow it to frighten you. Some people tell me that they are afraid of their fears. Fear is enough trouble, why be afraid of fear as well? Don't allow the fear to overshadow you. Sit with yourself; be with yourself. Let the fears come up; how long can you postpone your fears? How long can you control your fears? How long can you escape from your fears? Allow them to surface. Your whole being will shake, tears may roll, and you may have a deep depression. Let everything happen. Whether you consciously allow the fear to happen or not, the fearful incidents will happen. So it is better to face it with clarity and courage.

Our fears can be classified into five major categories. The first is the fear of losing wealth and comforts. The second is the fear of losing some part of our body due to an accident or disease. The third is the fear of losing our near and dear ones. The fourth is the fear of losing our mental well-being. The fifth is the fear of the unknown – that is the fear of death, ghosts, God, hell, heaven, and such things. These are the five major categories of fears we face in life. All our fears can be brought under these five categories.

Allow all of them to surface. Sit with yourself. Let everything come out; let your mind face the fears. Let your mind speak everything; let everything come out. Give it half an hour. Let it happen. You may feel depressed, tears may roll and

your whole body may shake. Let everything come out. What can be done? If you could do anything, you would have done it. Very clearly, your very existence proves that you are not able to do anything. That is why you are just keeping quiet. Allow the fear to happen. Let the fear come into your being.

Let the fear come up to your conscious layer without being suppressed. Accept that there is a possibility for all these fears to come true: your wealth may be stolen, you may have an accident, a near or dear one may die, or you may die. All these possibilities are real. Yes. What can be done? This is life. This is what is called facing reality as it is.

Only small kids need fantasies and imagination to face reality as it is. However, we need to understand the truth as it is. We can't escape from reality; we can't escape from the truth. The more we try to escape, the more it haunts us; the more it chases us. When we allow the fears to come out, suddenly we will see that they leave us, and we become more responsible, more intense.

In our second level meditation program, called Nithyananda Spurana Program or LBP Level 2, we have a meditation replicating the 'death experience'. It is based on my personal experience of death. People feel frightened to enter into the meditation, but on coming out of the experience, they feel completely reborn and clear.

They say, 'I have been postponing many things; now I have decided that when I go back, I will do those things.' Naturally these people become intense when they come out of the death meditation. They understand the value of relationships. Many people report that after that meditation, they began respecting their spouses; they do not take them for granted anymore. When we think of the possibility of death, we will never take life or our spouse for granted. We will start really living.

Similarly, when there is a possibility that our good health may be taken away from us, after this meditation, we will not take our health for granted; we will start living life intensely. We will not take things for granted when the possibility of death, of life being taken away from us, enters our being. We will realize our responsibility and the gift of life that Existence has bestowed upon us.

Let me tell you a small story to show how we take things for granted.

There was a king who felt completely bored after forty-five years of the good life. He had whatever he wanted: wealth, luxuries and other pleasures. Whatever was there to enjoy, he had it all. There was nothing for him to do.

All the excitement was lost; he was bored.

Let me tell you, when you have all material comforts, when you have everything that you wanted in the material plane, tremendous boredom will happen within you.

If we don't already have everything, we at least have the excitement of something left to achieve; we work for that. There is a need for continuity. There is a need to live. We will have some goal. When we have everything, what should we live for? Nothing! So never imagine that when we have everything, we will be happy.

This king entered hell simply because he had everything. He was totally depressed, bored. He didn't wish to come out of his room; he was lying there the entire day through the year. His ministers tried their best to bring him out, to enliven him, and to give him a little excitement. They brought the best comforts and luxuries from all over the country, all possible pleasures. Nothing worked on the king. He said, 'No, I don't care for anything.'

Finally they decided to do one thing. They said, 'O King, there is an enlightened master in the forest. He may be able to help you. Why don't you meet him? He will bring you out of your depression. Many have been helped by him.'

The king said, 'I am not interested in going anywhere.' The ministers asked him to try just once. He agreed saying, 'You are telling me so much about him, let me give him a try.'

He went to meet the master. The king was full of doubts and questions and unwilling to trust the master. He thought, 'Who knows if he is enlightened or not?' He asked the master straightaway, 'Can you help me come out of my depression?'

That is the way people question when they come just to check a master out. They don't come to learn; they come to verify. Many people ask me, 'Can you show us some path to achieve God?' I tell them, 'I will try, why don't you be seated?' They question me as if they have come to check me out!

Similarly, the king just wanted to check out that enlightened master. He asked straightaway, 'Can you do something to get me out of this depression?'

The master told him that if he could bring all his wealth in one bag, he could teach him.

Immediately the king decided that this master had nothing to do with enlightenment. 'He is a cheat, a bogus fellow, he is asking for my wealth.'

He went away without giving a reply. However, that night he wondered why the master asked for his wealth. 'In spite of my doubt about him, there is some grace, there is something about him working on me,' he thought.

People ask me how to find out if someone is enlightened. We can never find out using the intellect. Always try your best to suspect the person. If he is really enlightened, then his form, his very being, will impress us! We will not be able to forget him. That is the scale to check if a person is enlightened or not. People ask me if they should remember me all the time. I say, 'No. Try your best to forget me, to doubt me. If you have been really touched by me, you will not be able to do so, try as you might!' My presence will work beyond your intellect. If you are going to be helped by me, you will simply fall in tune with me.

Let me state very clearly: You will simply fall in tune! Through intellect we can never analyze or understand. With your intellect, try your best to say 'No.' If you always say 'No,' you will never be cheated; so that is the best thing to do. If the person is enlightened, he will be able to penetrate you beyond your intellect. He will be there in your being. He will be there in your mind in the day and in your dreams in the night. He will be haunting you. You cannot escape from him.

So this king felt he was being haunted by the master. The king was lying on his bed, rolling from side to side. 'Shall I try? If he takes away my wealth, I can easily catch him. After all, it's my kingdom.' He did all the calculations. 'In any case, I am not happy with this wealth; if he takes it away, what is there to lose? It is not useful to me, so let him have it.'

So the king decided to take the risk. The next day he converted his wealth into diamonds, put them all in one bag, and brought the bag to the master. He stood in front of the master. Without saying a single word, the master suddenly snatched the bag and started running. The king understood that this master really was a cheat. He started chasing the master.

We cannot successfully chase someone who lives in the forest since he knows the secrets of the forest. That is why professional people never catch bandits. Not only in this country, but all over the world, professional police never catch bandits. The bandits know the secrets of the landscape.

The master ran this way and that, since he knew the forest very well. The king was new to the forest and tried his best to follow. This chase went on and on. The king wondered why he had taken such a risk. He was blaming himself and suffering. 'When I return to the country, I will have nothing. I will be a beggar, I will need to beg in order to eat,' he thought. He visualized scenes of his poverty. He began suffering his poverty. Poverty had already entered his mind. When he was rich, he was suffering; now he was suffering due to poverty. That is the paradox of money: When it is there, it gives suffering; when it not there, again it gives suffering.

When it became evening, the king was about to give up. He thought, 'Now I cannot do anything. This master knows the forest too well.' At this point, the master stopped running. The moment the king saw that the master had stopped, he quickly caught up with him and grabbed the bag.

The master laughed. The king could not understand what was going on. The master said, 'Fool, now take this and enjoy.'

Suddenly, the king felt that he had become rich! Just because he had missed his wealth for one day, he felt he had become rich!

The master said, 'Fool, you were depressed because you took everything for granted. Now the same wealth that you lost for one day, you have back again; go and enjoy it.' The king came out of his depression just by being made to miss his wealth for one day!

In our life also we undergo the same thing when we allow the 'insecurity consciousness' to happen to us. Please understand that I am using the word 'consciousness'. The feeling of insecurity is a consciousness; it is the truth. If we allow this feeling to happen in us we will never take life for granted. We will start enjoying life intensely. If for just one day we intensely miss what we have, we will never take life for granted again.

For example, try to live for even twelve hours without opening your eyes. Keep them closed. You will then never take your eyes for granted! Similarly, we will never take our life for granted if we know it will be taken away from us. We forget that it will be taken away from us one day, that is the problem. We suppress the fear, the insecurity about losing our lives; that is why we never enjoy life, and we take it for granted.

The moment we experience insecurity, when we understand that life might be taken away from us any moment, we start living intensely! If we are depressed or

bored, and we lose everything for just twelve hours, we will suddenly understand this truth. We will never again take life for granted.

The king felt bored because he took life for granted. When we face death, when we face insecurity, immediately we understand how we have been taking life for granted, and we start living intensely. That is what this story means.

Yama gave relationships, wealth and finally enlightenment to Nachiketa. When people come out of the darkness or death meditation in the NSP, they tell me that they understand the real meaning of relationships; this means Yama has blessed them! They know the value of their wealth now; it means Yama has blessed them with wealth and now they will start living. They realize that life is the ultimate blessing, and naturally Yama has showered that blessing on them. They understand that the body may die and that there is something beyond the body and mind that exists in them; that is what I call *ātmajñāna* (Self-knowledge).

We have the blessings of relationships, wealth and enlightenment when we face fear and death with clarity. Here, when Krishna speaks of fearlessness, He means, 'Face it, face the fear; only then fearlessness can happen.' Only when we face the instinct to survive and the instinct to possess, will we enter the zone of fearlessness.

Until then it can never happen. You can face the instinct for survival or the instinct for possession only by making decisions based on the concept of 'You', not on the concept of 'me'.

As long as you work, act, speak and think centered on 'me, me, me', you will be a demon; you will work out of the instinct for survival and the instinct for possession. When you work based on the concept of 'You, you, you,' you will radiate a new energy.

Try this simple experiment: Try living for others' sake for just one week. I am not asking you to give away your property or any such thing.

Usually we think, 'What is there in this for me?' For example, if your wife calls you up to see a movie, you say, 'No, I want to go to the beach.' You always force your preference. Just for one week, in your office, in your house, wherever you go, decide and be with the attitude of 'you' instead of 'me'. Try this with simple, day-to-day life decisions, not things like giving away your property. Immediately the mind thinks, 'If I start thinking based on 'you', people will take me for granted, people may exploit me, people may cheat me.'

Alright, that is fine. Now nobody is cheating you. You are living centered on the idea of 'me'. You are protecting yourself. Are you happy? Come on, be frank, are

you happy? Not really! So why not then give a chance to be centered on 'You'? We live all our life with this '*āsuri sampat*,' what Krishna calls demonic nature, the attitude of 'me, me, me'.

Now just for one week, why not try this? These workshops and your time in the ashram is such a great chance to practice this. At present, when you come back into the hall for the next session, what do you do? You grab your seat. You leave your kerchief also to block the seat! First, you grab your seat. When *prasād* (blessed food) is given, you first grab your plate. For one week, take your plate after another person receives the food. See that the person next to you is comfortable. When you get up in the morning, ask the other person, 'Are you okay? Why don't you use the bathroom first, then I will use it.' We always say, 'Wait, I have to go first, I have some urgent work.' Instead of that attitude, try this experiment of letting others use or talk first with simple, small things. 'Please go ahead and use that. I will use it after you.' Or, 'You have been working continuously; let me help you with this small task.'

For one week, put that 'You' into your being. You will not know from where the bliss suddenly comes! Suddenly you will feel that your whole being is relaxed. When you don't give attention to 'me', you will never be 'in tension'. As long as you are giving attention to 'me', you will be continuously in tension.

When you replace 'me' with 'You', a deep inner healing happens in you.

What I am talking about is not morality. Please don't think I am teaching you how to live happily. There are many who write books like, '*How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*.' I am not the person to teach 'How-to stuff.' I am not giving this as morality; I am giving this as a spiritual practice. If you are working towards spiritual growth, if you are a 'professional seeker', please try this one practice. I use the term 'professional seeker' because there is always a group of people who are professional seekers. If any *swami* (holy man) comes, they attend his programs. Any *swami*, any book, any spiritual event - they will always be present. People come to me and say, '*Swamiji*, for the last thirty years, I have been seeking.' Don't feel proud about that.

Don't be proud that you are a professional seeker. Please be clear that if you have pride that you are a professional seeker or that you know some *swami* or the other, or that you have attended some discourse or the other, some meditation program or the other, you are not on the true spiritual path; you are just window shopping, that's all.

If you are really a seeker, if you think you are seeking spirituality, then do this one spiritual practice. Try this single spiritual practice for seven days. If you think there is any way I can help you, take this single statement and forget about everything else. Work based on this single statement: instead of deciding based on 'me, me, me', decide based on 'You, you, you'.

I am not asking you to give away or renounce anything; just try this with simple, day-to-day decisions. You will see something happening in your being. The tension, that solid weight in you will melt, loosen up; you will experience inner healing and a tremendous and cool, blissful breeze will happen in you. Naturally when you get a glimpse of this mood, you automatically start expressing this attitude in day-to-day life, everyday and every moment.

We always choose words and actions based on 'me'. For instance, when we shout at somebody, we say, 'I am doing it for his good, for his sake.' When someone is angry, we say, 'See, he is like a demon, he is mad at others, he is shouting.' When someone else is angry, we say he is a demon; when we get angry, we say it is for that person's good! 'If I don't teach him, who will teach him? I am doing it only for his good.'

Please understand, don't play with words; be straight. Experiment with this for the next week, not longer. After that you can become your old self. You can't become, that is a different issue! Try it on simple things. Instead of deciding based on 'me', decide based on 'You'. The irritation that you continuously carry will disappear. The instinct to survive, to possess, will disappear. You will become an empty being.

You will become a hollow bamboo. Whenever you become a hollow bamboo, you are a flute in the hands of the Divine. Whatever happens through you will be divine; you will imbibe the divine nature.

Krishna further explains step-by-step how to imbibe divine nature: How to cause the cognitive shift at the deep, subtle level.

Please understand that working at the level of *satva* (equanimity), *rajas* (aggression), or *tamas* (slothfulness) is difficult. It is akin to changing all the servants in order to change the master. We will never be able to do that. Just change the master and all the servants will be transformed.

Here, Krishna gives the technique to change the master, the ego that makes decisions. He gives the straight technique for the cognitive shift to happen. At present, cognition happens in us keeping the 'I' as the center; He gives a simple

technique to replace the 'I' with 'You' so that the cognitive shift happens. This same system will be used for the divine nature.

Rama and Ravana in the Hindu epic Ramayana, are both energetic; both have the *brahmāstra* (high energy weapon). The only difference is that one is centered on 'I'; the other one is centered on 'you.' That is the only thing that makes one person divine and the other demonic. Rama is divine, Ravana is demonic.

Krishna goes further to give subtle techniques to experience the consciousness of 'You', the ultimate consciousness, the consciousness of the Whole, the '*daivika sampat*' or divine nature of your being through this cognitive shift.

Step-by-step Krishna explains all these great qualities. As I mentioned, please don't try to practice these qualities as a separate effort. The more we try to practice these separately, the more schizophrenic we will become. We will be fighting with ourselves. Do something that will make you express these qualities in life. Automatically you will become blissful, free from anger and full of *dharmic* (righteous) qualities.

When we do anything including charity, by force, or social conditioning, merely because we have been told that we will go to heaven, we will have trouble. Never do *dāna* (charity) if you feel something is being taken from you. The word *dāna*, giving or donating, is wrong; *sharing* is the right word. Because we feel we have enough, we share with others. With the word *dāna*, there is ego, the thought, 'I am higher, the giver; you are lower, the receiver.' With sharing, the idea of donation does not exist. The thought is, 'We have got it, let us share.'

Sharing is the right attitude. If we do charity with the attitude of 'I', we will later check whether our name has appeared on the plaque! 'Has my name been spelled correctly? Is it the right size? Is the font larger or smaller than that of someone else's name?' Especially in India, even if a tube light is presented to a temple, it will be inscribed with the words 'Ramanathan, son of Somanathan, in the memory of his mother, Saundarya Lakshmi, who passed away on this date, presented this to this temple on this day.' It will be painted with black paint. When we switch on the tube light, we will just see a black line on the wall - no light!

Ramana Maharshi says beautifully, 'When you don't ask, you will be given.' I tell people, 'When *you* don't tell what good things you do, *I* will tell.' When people do things for the ashram but do not tell anyone about them, *I* tell the whole world about them. However, when they tell, I keep quiet. When you don't do from the

attitude of 'I', you won't feel like something is being taken away from you. Above all, you will feel tremendous fulfillment. Anything you do with the attitude of 'you' will make you radiate these beautiful, divine qualities.

Even Yashoda (the foster mother of Krishna) had the idea of 'I'.

Let me tell you a lovely story. It is about a great devotee named Tarangini. It is a wonderful expression of love; the 'I' and 'you' are expressed truly here.

The story goes that within twelve hours of Krishna's birth, He was handed over to Yashoda. He took birth at midnight, and before sunrise, He was brought to Yashoda. This was because of a prophecy that Kamsa, His uncle, would come to kill Him at sunrise. Yashoda brought Him up until He left his home, Vrindavan. Despite her bringing Him up, when Yashoda asked Him to sing or play the flute, He would not play.

However, when Tarangini, a devotee of Krishna from a lower caste asked Krishna to play, He would play for her. She would stand in a corner and would not come in front of Him. She would quietly enjoy His presence and music from a distance. Once Krishna had gone, Tarangini would touch the dust in the place where He had stood and played.

One day Krishna forgot the flute and went away. Of course, He did not forget, He must have pretended to have forgotten it. Would Krishna forget? He would make others forget, but He would never forget anything! He pretended to have forgotten the flute. Tarangini noticed the flute and with love and care, kept it in her home to hand over to Krishna.

The next day Krishna said, 'Someone has taken My flute.' He pretended to search for it. He learned that Tarangini had the flute and went to her house. Since He was from a higher caste, He needed a reason to go to the area of the lower community people. Yashoda would ask Him why he had gone there. She would punish Him, since higher caste people did not go to that area. Krishna went to the area which was full of mud, dirty roads, and a hut in which a thousand suns were shining, meaning that there were a thousand holes in the hut! Krishna entered the house and asked for His flute.

Tarangini was totally shaken to see Krishna in her house. She was overwhelmed; she was unable to speak. She ran and brought the flute to Him. Krishna continued His act, asking if He should play the flute. And who can refuse when Krishna asks?

She replied, 'My Lord, even Gods and *ṛṣis* come down to listen to Your music, how can I say no?'

He sat on the steps, and started playing; she sat in a corner filled with ecstasy. Yashoda arrived at that moment. She felt terribly upset because He had never played the flute for her.

She said, 'I take care of you; I give you food and look after you completely. You never play for me. Yet you come and play here for this urchin girl!'

Please understand that the attitude of Tarangini is 'you' and the attitude of Yashoda is 'me'. Due to this, all Yashoda's service had no positive result for her. Since Yashoda disturbed him, Krishna stopped playing. The tune that Krishna played to Tarangini is known as *punnagavarali*, 'the broken tune'.

Krishna told Yashoda, 'You served Me, no doubt, but with the attitude of 'I'. Tarangini is devoted to Me; you are devoted to yourself. As long as I am your Krishna, you take care of Me; that means you are devoted to yourself, you are centered on yourself and not on Me. That is why you are unable to digest five minutes of separation.'

This is the instinct to possess. Krishna continued, 'You have come all the way here; you are not even giving five minutes of My space to her. Tarangini never asked Me to come to her house. She never expected that I would play for her. She is totally dedicated, with only the attitude of 'you'.'

Then Krishna blessed Tarangini saying, 'You will have *sāmīpya mukti*; you will become a *shanbaga* flower and reside in My garland. You will stay with Me forever.'

There are four *muktis* or levels of liberation: *sālokya mukti*, *sārūpya mukti*, *sāmīpya mukti* and *sāyujya mukti*. *Sālokya* means 'same place'; it means we will be allowed to stay in *Vaikunta*, Vishnu's abode. We will have a residence in heaven. *Sārūpya* means we will have the same form as the Lord. For example, we can see *Jaya-Vijaya*, the gatekeepers of heaven; they have the same *śankh* (conch), *cakra* (discus), *gada* (mace), *padma* (lotus) - all the accessories of Vishnu in the same *svarūpa* (form).

Sāmīpya (being near) is being in the inner circle; the *cakra* that Vishnu is carrying has achieved *sāmīpya mukti*! Becoming enlightened oneself is *sāyujya mukti*. *Sāmīpya mukti* is the best enlightenment because we can enjoy Him forever! It is like an ant forever enjoying the sugar candy.

Sāyujya mukti is like *becoming* the sugar candy. This is for all the *ṛṣis*. For devotees, the ultimate state is *sāmīpya mukti*. So Krishna blessed Tarangini with *sāmīpya mukti*.

He said, 'May you become a flower in My garland and be on My body. May you be on Me.' He then turned to Yashoda and said, 'Because you served with the attitude of 'me, me, me', may you not have any temple on planet earth.'

Yashoda served Krishna so much, but have you seen a single Yashoda temple? No! Everywhere you see Radha temples. If you go to Vrindavan, Radha is worshipped more than Krishna. Even a milkman when selling milk will call out, 'Radhe, Radhe,' not 'Krishna, Krishna.' Despite all her service, since it was centered on 'me', Yashoda was unable to achieve enlightenment.

On the other hand, Tarangini, being born of a lower community, was never even close to Krishna. She was not allowed to serve Him; however, because she lived with the attitude of 'you, you, you', Krishna went to her home, blessed her with eternal closeness to Him, and gave her liberation.

Even if they run after the Divine, people with the attitude of 'I' can never reach the Divine, because the Divine runs away from them. If we live with the attitude of 'you', even if we live in a hut with a thousand holes, Krishna waits for us at our doorstep. Many stories illustrate how the 'I' drives the Divine away, and the 'you' attracts the Divine. One small attitude change can take care of the cognitive shift.

Let me tell you one more small story. It is about the fight between the *śankh* (conch), *cakra* (discus) and *pādukā* (sandals) of Vishnu.

Vishnu has a *śankh*, *cakra* and *pādukā*. One day He returns home after having gone out. Vishnu is blissful energy, and likes to go around and enjoy!

Vaikuṇṭha, Vishnu's abode is totally different from Shiva's abode. It is a fun place; continuously dance goes on and all varieties of food are served!

Anyhow, Vishnu returns and leaves his sandals outside His bedroom and goes in to rest on his beautiful serpent bed, *Adishesha*. The conch and discus look at the sandals and laugh. 'See, you may carry Vishnu all day long, but when He comes into the room, you must stay out. Only we can enter with Him. You have not really achieved *sāmīpya mukti* (close to the Lord). We are with him twenty-four hours a day. For the twelve hours of the night, you are outside. So you have half *sāmīpya mukti*; we have full *sāmīpya mukti*.'

The sandal replies, 'Alright, what can I do? Whatever Vishnu wants, let it be.' The next morning when Vishnu comes out, the sandals ask Him, 'Lord, the conch and discus are making fun of me. Is it true that You are unhappy with me? Is it true that I have only fifty percent *sāmīpya mukti*? What mistake have I made?'

Lord Vishnu laughs and tells the sandals, 'Attitude and time does not mean that you are unimportant or they are important. Attitude and time do not show favoritism, I have no favoritism; each of you has a different place, work and things to do.'

He then adds, 'By worshipping the conch and discus, people cannot get liberation. However, by worshipping you, they can get liberation! The sandals when worshiped can give enlightenment. The discus kills; the conch declares victory in war. These are their roles; worshipping them cannot give liberation. Your duties are different. Your place is different. Only by holding you, people can attain liberation. Since they have made fun of you, let them be born on planet earth and worship you for fourteen years. The conch and discus will take birth as Bharata and Shatrughna (brothers of Lord Rama, in the Indian epic, Ramayana) and worship the sandals of Lord Rama for fourteen years when He is exiled to the forest. Let them worship you and understand that only you can liberate them.'

We must understand that people around the master have different responsibilities. If we think that some are important and others unimportant, we will face difficulties. The person who thinks he is important will be made to kneel in front of the person whom he thinks is unimportant.

The conch and the discus started thinking 'me, me, me' and so naturally they had to suffer. The sandals thought, 'You, You, You' and were therefore worshipped. Vishnu blessed the sandals saying, 'Let the conch and discus worship you and attain liberation, and then they will never talk about you like this.'

How we are centered and where our attention is focused is what makes our life demonic or divine. Divine or demon is determined only by one concept: 'You' or 'me'.

Now, here is another important point. After hearing about 'You' and 'me', the next thought that may come to our mind is, '*Swamiji*, I do not know whether I am working based on 'You' or based on 'me'. I am worried about whether I am a demon or divine. Please guide me, tell me, based on which quality I am working.'

Let me assure you that if this fear arises in you, you are divine. The person who is ready to look into his mind, the person who is afraid about whether he is living rightly or wrongly, always lives rightly. Only the person who is arrogant is demonic. The person who is demonic never considers whether he does right or wrong. He thinks that he is always right.

Arjuna also has that fear, '*Bhagavān*, am I living with divine or demonic nature?' He is not expressing that feeling, but his face reveals his fear.

Now Lord Krishna explains that living with transcendental qualities, that is the attitude of 'you', one achieves liberation or enlightenment - *nivritti*. By living with the idea of 'I' we create more bondage. The demonic qualities make for bondage, meaning *pravritti*.

Lord Krishna assures Arjuna that he is born with divine qualities.

If we have ever contemplated whether we were living with 'You' or 'I', if the doubt ever arose, if we have suffered, if we have felt fear or guilt, be clear that we are born with divine nature. On the other hand, if we feel that we are living properly, and that we came here because we had no other entertainment, with the thought, 'Let me listen to whatever master is saying,' if we have that attitude, then we know our nature!

If we have looked once into our being, considered and thought, 'Am I living with demonic nature? Or am I living with divine nature? What is my nature?' If we looked even once into our being and tried to measure ourselves with this scale, we are in the position of Arjuna. Be very clear that we too are born with divine qualities. So if you are worried after hearing the qualities, then be sure, you are born with divine qualities and you don't need to worry about it any further.

When a person who is righteous listens to such words, he will try to verify his own nature, since he is centered on *dharma*, righteousness. People who are *adharmic*, non-righteous, even if they listen to such discourses, think, 'Oh, *Swamiji* speaks about all these things as though he lives them. Let us see how he lives them. Let us see if his living is in tune with his ideas.' A person who is divine tries to chisel or correct himself, whereas a person who is demonic tries to correct others. With demonic nature, the person holds the hammer and chisel towards others, whereas with the divine nature, he holds the hammer and chisel towards himself.

When we carve ourselves, we become God. If we have ever looked within ourselves, then we are born with the divine nature. Now Arjuna has become

mature; the moment he hears these truths, he looks into his being. Naturally then Lord Krishna tells him that he is born with divine nature.

Krishna describes the qualities of a person who lives based on 'I, I, I.' I don't think we need to understand these qualities because we already have these qualities which is why we still feel we are suffering. There is no need to read these qualities, because we know enough of them. All that we need to know is how to live with the attitude of 'You, You, You'.

Please understand that when we live with the attitude of 'You, You, You', we completely forget ourselves; we disappear into Existence. We are in bliss.

Let me share an important technique that Lord Krishna speaks about. For three days, think you are somebody else. It may seem funny! For instance, if you are a doctor, for three days think you are a beach freak. Clearly visualize yourself as somebody else, not a doctor. The moment you change the idea about yourself, a tremendous freedom happens to you. Your tension disappears.

Before taking *sanyās*, aspirants undergo a meditation called '*bhūta śarīra vāsa*' meaning they are giving up their entire past. They perform the death ceremony of their parents, *śrāddhā*, even if their parents are alive. This is because if the parents die after the person takes *sanyās* (renunciation), who will do the death rituals for them? Therefore they do it now itself. They also do their own *śrāddhā* (death rituals) since they will have no children and there will be no one to do it for them!

After the *śrāddhā*, they must lose their identity, whatever they may have been - doctor, lawyer or engineer. To do that they smear their entire body with sacred ash, and like a ghost, they put on *rudrākṣamālā* (necklace of the holy *rudrākṣ* seeds) and celebrate! Their identity is completely lost and they beg for alms. They do not associate with their identity. They completely break their identity. For three days, they meditate that they are somebody else. Only if they pass this meditation and break from their identity for three days, are they given *sanyās*.

This is '*bhūta śarīra vāsa*,' breaking away from our past identity.

For three days try this meditation. For three days, think you are somebody else. Whatever you think of as your property, forget it; whatever you think are your problems, throw them out; whatever you think of as your profession, give it up. You can pick it up later, but for three days throw it all away.

You will see a new consciousness rising in you. If you throw away the 'me', that alone liberates you, and if you start working on 'You', you experience tremendous

bliss. When you drop 'me', you experience peace; when you start working with 'You', you experience peace and bliss. This is the straight path to peace and bliss.

A demon is not one with horns on his head, with protruding teeth, with six hands and a fearsome look. Krishna says that one with a demonic nature is not aware of what bondage is and what liberation is. People of this nature are so deeply immersed in their attachment and aversion that they no longer feel themselves separated from these qualities. They are so much in bondage to their senses that they can no longer know they are in bondage.

To a madman in an asylum, the rest of the world is mad, not he. He is the only sane person in an otherwise insane world.

Once a famous actor went for a public relations visit to an institution for the mentally disabled. This man was so well known that everyone recognized him. As he was taken on a visit around this asylum, an inmate asked him curiously, 'Who are you?'

The actor was surprised since he thought everyone recognized him. He said quite pompously that he was so and so, the famous actor.

The inmate signaled him aside and whispered, 'You know, that is what I said to them when I came here. They cured me in six months. You also stay here six months and you will be alright!'

Many of us are like this! We do not see a prison wall around us, that's all. However, we are led exactly the same way through greed and fear, through attachment and aversion.

We can excuse rats for constantly running in a maze without knowing how to get out. How can we excuse a human being who has been given the gift of cognition and discrimination? Why don't we use the higher intelligence provided to us to at least understand where we are going wrong?

A small story:

A preacher attracted many disciples because he promised that he would take them to heaven after they died.

One day the preacher died. Two disciples committed suicide so that they could follow him to heaven. They did not want to miss the chance, in case he forgot what he had promised them. The preacher was happy that two disciples followed him in death.

The three reached the gates of this beautiful palace and the guard seemed to be aware of their coming, and let them in. The preacher turned around and said to the disciples, 'See, whatever I told you is coming true. All those fools who did not follow you missed their chance.'

Three beautiful women received them and served them delicious food and wine. They told them, 'Whatever you wish for will be yours to enjoy. All you need to do is merely think of what you want.' For the next few days, they thoroughly enjoyed the palace with its comforts. Even before they thought of something, what they wanted materialized before them.

In a week's time, they became bored. The preacher said, 'This is a wonderful place, yet I am homesick.' His disciples said, 'Yes, master, we too are homesick; this is no fun anymore. We cannot even fantasize. Even before we fantasize and finish, it becomes reality. We never thought we could become bored of heaven, but that has happened.'

Looking around, they noticed a few windows. However these windows were locked and they could not see anything outside. Even when they wished that these windows would open, they would not. Instead, the guard came in. He explained, 'Sir, your desires only apply to the space within the four walls of this palace. You cannot open these windows.'

The preacher said, 'Look, we are bored. We are homesick. We want to look at planet earth where we came from. Even if we cannot go there, can't we at least look?'

The guard said, 'Sir, no, you cannot.'

The preacher became annoyed, 'Can we then at least go to hell?'

The guard turned to him surprised, 'Where do you think you have been all this week?'

We get ourselves so comfortable in our own hell, in our own demonic nature, that we can no longer differentiate between hell and heaven! We cannot tell demonic and divine nature apart. We do not know the difference between bondage and liberation.

Q: Swamiji, from what I hear, our default state is the divine, and we slip into demonic nature. Does caring for others keep us in this divine state?

You are right. As I said, even if you start with the doubt, 'Perhaps I'm not divine,' you start moving into that default divine nature.

Caring for others, focusing on the 'you' instead of 'I,' automatically takes you to the path of the Divine. The problem with most people however, is that their caring is a business transaction. They care when there is something in it for them. Whether the transaction is with mother, father, spouse, son, daughter, relative or friend, there is a 'What's in it for me?' attitude.

The care arises not out of real love, but out of attachment or aversion. We care because something may happen if we do not, or we care so that something good happens to us. It is like providing any other service. It becomes contractual.

When the focus is on 'you,' as in caring for someone with no expectation, with no conditions, we slip into a state of bliss. This state of bliss is our natural state. When you are focused on 'I,' you invite suffering and misery.

Remember one thing: God is closest when we are blissful; when we are in misery we are farthest from God. The dilemma is that most of us remember God when we are in misery and that is the moment when we are farthest away also! Even if we shout from a place of misery, our voice cannot reach Him. When we are blissful, we need not even whisper. Without saying a single word, our prayer is understood. Even our silence is eloquent.

This has been the problem throughout the ages: Man remembers God only when he is miserable, which is the wrong moment to remember Him. When you remember God in misery, that means you want to use Him. And God cannot be used as a means to some end. That is sacrilege. It is using God as a tool. To use another human being as a means is immoral; what shall we say about using God as a means to another end?

When we are in a blissful moment, when we feel blessed by Existence, let us savor that moment. That is when we are closest to God. Let that moment be of gratitude, prayer, and meditation. In that moment, remember God existentially, not verbally. Let your whole being feel the vibration and become overwhelmed with the beyond. Don't lose that moment. It is precious.

Everybody is born ready for divinity. If we miss it, it is totally our responsibility. We miss it because we never look within. We miss it because we never use the opportunity that life gives us. We miss it because we are lazy. We miss it because we are unconscious, sleepy. We miss it because we are not aware of the great blessing that life is.



How To Save Our Planet

16.8 People with such demonic qualities think there is no ultimate energy or intelligence, which is running this planet earth, which is running the universe, and that this whole creation is produced out of lust and desire, and is unreal.

16.9 Following this material view of creation, these degraded souls with small intellect, lost in themselves and committing cruel deeds, are engaged in the destruction of the world.

Please understand, the energy that is within us, the energy that drives us is the same energy that drives this universe, this solar system and planet earth. This energy is intelligence, the highest intelligence.

Krishna says that when we are unable to recognize this energy, we are demonic. We do not believe everything operates out of this energy; instead we believe we make things happen with our greed, lust and desires. We believe we run this world with our puny intellect that we consider intelligence.

For years, many religious institutions believed planet earth was the center of this universe. They killed millions for believing otherwise. Though they may have believed in some form of God who created this universe, they seemed to think that this God was situated on this planet.

They assumed that they ruled earth, and that there was nothing beyond them, so they could destroy people who did not share such a belief. We need not even be irreligious to be demonic. We just need to be so self-centered that even our God is at our disposal. Then we are demonic.

Such a belief is different from the concept of believing that you are God and that God resides in you. This belief arises from deep awareness instead of dark ignorance and is totally selfless. Once you become God, the rest of the world is part

of you and you are part of that world. There is no longer the duality of 'I' and 'You'. Both merge into the non-duality of either 'I' or 'You'; it does not matter.

Even to this day, there is no logical explanation for the creation of this universe. There are theories; that is all. All of them are only theories. The Big Bang theory says that the universe was created in one huge cosmic explosion or Big Bang. But it cannot answer the question, 'What caused that explosion?' What was there before or who struck the match or what created that explosion is unknown. If there was something that led up to the Big Bang, how can the Big Bang be the cause of creation?

More intelligent and aware scientists understand and are creating new concepts. They too, like our sages, suggest that a cosmic intelligence runs the universe. The universe is not dead; it is not just matter. They say that the world is not just pure physics and chemistry.

People who think the world is pure chemistry become demons. Naturally, if we think this whole world is just inert matter, we try to acquire more and more by killing everybody, by hook or by crook, by right or wrong means, and we do what we want to. Only when we understand that this universe is intelligence, and that it responds to our thoughts and activities, will we live properly, or start really living.

A small story:

A group of scientists thought they could do anything and everything. They challenged God, 'Now you are unnecessary. Whatever you do, we can do. We can even clone human beings. What do you say? Now we can also develop whatever you have created on earth. Our department has developed everything. We can do anything.'

God was surprised to see all the scientists' creations - the sizes of the bananas, and other fruits they had created, and so forth!

The scientists then challenged God to a competition. 'Come face us. We will do whatever you do. We are better than you; you can go and rest. We don't need you anymore.'

God agreed to face the scientists.

God created a plant, and immediately the scientists created the same plant in a better way. One by one, they created the same thing God created. Suddenly, God took a little dust and created a man.

The scientists said, 'This is not a big deal, now that we have the ability to clone.' They took some dust and were about to create a man.

God said 'Stop. Bring your own dust and create. Don't use My dust!'

Whatever we may achieve, wherever science may go, the Divine is alive. God exists and the cosmic intelligence runs this whole universe. We may create man out of dust, but where will we get the dust from? We cannot create dust! It *has* to be God's dust! Be clear that there is a pure energy and intelligence that is the source, the underpinning of the whole universe.

When a person is living within the limits of the intellect and 'me', he cannot experience the Whole. He knows only logic and calculation and with that arrogance thinks he knows everything.

Many young people come to me with their parents who force them to prostrate at my feet. I never like people being forced to fall at my feet. If these young people want they can leave, but they stand there and ask questions such as, 'Why should I fall at your feet?' I tell them, 'I have not asked you to. Why should you stand here and argue?' Yet their arrogance is so much that they stand and argue. I think to myself, 'They should probably get married.' After a year when they return as married people, without prompting they simply do a *sāstānga namaskār*, a full prostration, because in one year they would have been completely trained to surrender!

What we cannot do in ten years can be done in one year of marriage! Those same people fall flat on the ground and know how to listen. They are polite. They say, 'Yes, *Swamiji*!' They know the power of the 'Yes' *mantra*!

That is what should be done to demonic people: Simply get them married and the demonic qualities will disappear. Perhaps that is why God created the institution of marriage!

People with demonic qualities say the world is produced out of sexual desire and lust. Lust is the reason for the whole universe, they say.

Please be clear that lust cannot be the reason. Intelligence, the divine energy is the cause and effect of this whole universe; the cause and effect is the Divine that is responsible for the universe. However, when we think it is lust or that we are responsible, we live with the idea of 'me, me, me'.

Krishna says firmly that when we believe that we are the cause of this universe, this Existence, we are so deluded and locked in our own identities, we destroy the world and ourselves as well.

Our ancient sages, the great *ṛṣis*, were not fools. They did not retire to forests because they had nowhere else to go. Many were great kings, rulers of this planet, and they voluntarily left behind all that they had, so that they could understand where they came from. It was not enough for them to read and listen to the experiences of others; they chose to experience the truth themselves.

In the process, they realized themselves and became liberated. What they realized in one sense was simple. As many others over thousands of years have discovered, they discovered that they were part of this cosmic Existence. They realized and experienced that they too were Gods. They found that the same energy that operated in this universe operated within them. They experienced that every living being on earth came from the same Source, and is the same Source.

If we studied elementary geography in school, we know that at the core of the earth there is molten magma, not very different from what there is in other planets. Around the core the earth has cooler layers and finally there is the topsoil on which plants grow and we live.

Now, what do we do when we need water and there is no river nearby? We dig a well and, as if by magic, water appears. Now our neighbor wants water; he too digs a well and finds water. Our well and his well may be in two different houses and owned by two different people, yet are these waters different?

They come from the same source, whether you dig a well in India or whether you dig a well in the United States. The locations are at two ends of the world, but the source is the same. Not merely the source, the water is also the same. Yet, we fight over common resources, thinking that we created them and therefore we own them.

This attitude of selfishness leads only to destruction of everything - the environment, the world and all living beings. One part of this world, perhaps with less than one-sixth of the world's population, the so-called developed world, the so-called Western world, consumes more than half of the natural resources of this world. What right do they have to do this?

Not only do they consume more than half the resources, they cause such pollution that the earth trembles. Gradually all the glaciers of this world will disappear, the poles will melt, the oceans will rise and a large part of the world will be under

water. However, the underdeveloped world, the poorer parts of the world will be under water, because the people will not have the means to get themselves out of trouble.

We actually waste a lot of water. Why do we need forks, spoons and knives to eat when we have hands and fingers? Also, to clean the crockery and utensils, we need more water and detergents. Detergents pollute the water in our streams. We think our fingers may be dirty; have we ever looked at the utensils we eat with? If you look under the microscope, you will find more bacteria than you can ever imagine.

Then we need to sterilize those utensils. We use chemicals to do that. Those chemicals can lead to cancer. Doctors in the West have warned that reheating food in plastic containers in microwave ovens can lead to cancer. Soon, they will find that eating food stored in refrigerators leads to other complications.

It was said by our Eastern forefathers long ago that food should not be eaten four hours after it is cooked. It becomes *non-satvic* then and it is unfit for our energy. That's why most people are demonic. Who eats food within four hours? Not even those who cook it. So, we descend into *tamas*, ignorance, by eating *non-satvic*, de-energized food, and convert ourselves into demons.

Everything adds up. The Hitlers of this world do not happen by accident. They are created by society. When Krishna says *alpabuddhi*, low intelligence, He is not referring to our IQ; He is referring to our emotional and spiritual quotient. He refers to the absence of higher intelligence and awareness.

How can we be aware when we are being rushed from one activity to another? How can awareness arise when we are brainwashed into a belief that we can multi-task? We constantly look at what results we must get, rather than focusing on what we are doing.

How many of us think about a job when we are engaged in that job? We drive listening to the news or music. We eat while working on the computer. We talk to another person while watching the television. Even in the shower, we argue with ourselves! What do we do in a focused manner, while staying in the present? No wonder we cannot sleep well, because all the demons of the day chase us in the night.

When we are not in the present, we are in a state of low intelligence; we become demons. We become Hitlers or worse. Hitler became one of the greatest

demons the modern world has known because of his insecurities. He was conditioned by society to fear and hate. His fears were magnified so that the whole world feared him.

Low intelligence leads to cruel deeds. When we have no awareness of who we are, we do not care about anyone else. Not even about our parents. We are so self-centered that we will harm our mother if we feel in our imagination that she stands in our way.

All this can change; all this can be changed. All that is needed is the cognitive shift from the demon to the divine, from 'I' to 'You'. There must be an understanding from childhood that this planet is common property and it cannot be owned and exploited or used by playing one against another. It can only be cared for together and shared.

Everyone must be educated to understand that anything that harms the environment harms everyone on planet earth. No one is protected. What is done in the USA affects people across the globe, in China and India, and vice versa.

We are not talking about the power of manmade weapons of mass destruction that can be set to destroy large numbers of people by pressing a button. We are talking about everything that we do, the way we eat, the way we dress and the way we live, everything affects all of us as these affect the environment we live in.

The environment we live in, the oxygen we breathe, the water we drink, the soil that gives the food we eat, all this is energy. This is what we call *panca bhūta* in Sanskrit, the five elemental energies that sustain us. When these are destroyed by our low intelligence, out of our selfishness, the world around us collapses.

Q: Swamiji, What is the meaning of the mantra OM?

OM is the sound that is heard in one's own being when all other noise in the mind has stopped. When there are no thoughts floating in the mind, when there is nothing to disturb, one senses a deep vibration in the being. This is the sound of OM.

We don't make this sound. We cannot make this sound. It must happen by itself. It is not a *mantra* to be chanted. We must be utterly silent and receptive. We must listen. We must learn to listen, not merely with our ears but with our whole being. Something then happens within us. Then we hear it. It is what the sages call the

still, small voice within. Zen masters call it the sound of one hand clapping, and *vedic* tradition terms it *praṇava mantra* and calls it *OM*.

OM is the soundless sound. It is the *anāhata* sound, the sound that is not created. We teach a meditation called the *Mahāmantra* in our first-level Life Bliss Programs. This meditation energizes the *anāhata cakra* or heart energy center. *Anāhata* means that which is uncreated. *OM* is that sound which is creation itself; it was not created. When you practice this meditation to energize your *anāhata cakra*, the *OM* sound is created within you. That is why this meditation is called the *Mahāmantra*, or great *mantra*. It is a tremendously powerful self-healing meditation.

Typically all invocations to deities begin with *OM* as the first word or prefix. There are *mantras* that are chanted in prayers called *aṣṭottaras* (108 names) or *sahasranamas* (1008 names). These *mantras* are descriptions of the deities, each *mantra* extolling one or another feature of the deity. Usually these are prefixed by the word *OM*. They are suffixed with the word *namaḥ*. *Namaḥ* literally translates as, ‘I am not,’ signifying surrender to the deity.

The first verse of Vishnusahasranama, the 1008 names of Vishnu, is ‘*OM achyutāya namaha*’. It means ‘Krishna is the incarnation of Vishnu’. The Vishnusahasranama is Bhishma’s prayer to Krishna, as Bhishma lay awaiting death on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. As such, it is part of Mahabharata.



How To Save Ourselves

16.10 Filled with insatiable desires, hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance; holding wrong views due to delusion, they act with impure motives and for impermanent objectives.

16.11,12 Obsessed with endless anxiety lasting until death, considering sense gratification their highest aim, and convinced that sense pleasure is everything; bound by hundreds of ties of desire and enslaved and filled with anger, they strive to obtain wealth by unlawful means to fulfill sensual pleasures.

What Krishna says here is applicable to a vast majority of people today.

Times have changed since the days of the *vedic* educational system where, from childhood, one was guided toward self-awareness. Modern day education is based upon logic, science and rules, and is short on self-awareness and *dharma*, righteousness.

When we are caught in the material world, focused on 'I' and 'me', we are stuck in the *mūlādhāra* and *svādiṣṭhāna cakras*. Greed and fear rule us and we are forever in the bondage of attachment and aversion. Whatever we do is with selfish and impure motives, and results in consequences that are mostly illusory.

In the earlier verse, Krishna explained how a person with demonic nature could destroy this world. Here, He shows how such a person can destroy himself. Out of pride, arrogance and hypocrisy, such a person moves in a path directed by purely selfish and material objectives, and derives results that produce suffering.

When we focus on matter, we tend to lose sight of the energy inherent in matter. When we focus on the form, we cannot see the formless that enables the form. What is permanent in both cases is the formless energy that drives the form and matter.

Science has moved a long way from the Newtonian model based on matter and form. This model is no longer relevant. From the days of Einstein, when matter and energy were linked inextricably, the concept has changed. Today all sciences accept that matter and energy not only co-exist, but also that the same object or event can be perceived or experienced by the observer as matter or energy or both.

So, we are back to the Indian master Adi Shankaracharya's theory that the observer determines what is being observed. We may think this is fanciful. However, this is an accepted theory in the most advanced form of Quantum Physics today. Elementary subatomic particles, when observed in identical conditions with identical tools, appear differently to different observers. As yet there is no explanation for this phenomenon.

Our ancient sages explained that this happens based on our deep-rooted conditioning, which colors our perceptions. When science is sufficiently advanced, it will accept this truth.

Events that happen around us, as well as objects that surround us can be viewed in different ways. Everything depends upon our conditioning, our *saṁskāras*.

A couple with young children was driving along the beach one warm summer evening. A young woman in the convertible ahead of them stood up and waved. She had no clothes on!

The parents pretended nothing was amiss.

A small shrill voice piped up from the backseat, 'Mom, Dad, look! The lady is not wearing a seat belt!'

Perceptions differ based on our experience bank. A child's perception is innocent and without negativity. It is totally objective. Over time, we accumulate feelings of guilt, shame, fear, arrogance, hypocrisy, greed and irritation that our responses to situations are tinged by these negative emotions.

As I have explained before, most humans live in their *mūlādhāra cakra*, unable to rise beyond their survival needs. Their entire focus is on survival and their emotions are anger, greed and lust. Everything is physical, material and self-centered. It is all business.

A few are caught in their *svādiṣṭhāna cakra* and stay there bound by insecurities. Fears of various kinds control them. Men are more prone to stay blocked in *mūlādhāra* and women in *svādiṣṭhāna*. Both are unfulfilling. Both are unreal from a

spiritual perspective. In *mūlādhāra*, we are caught in fantasies. Our entire life is based on how we wish it were, rather than enjoying it as it is. This only leads to suffering.

A step further into *svādiṣṭhāna* is still unreal, because no fear is real. All fears are created by the mind. All we need to do is face the fear, and it disappears. The most serious fear is death. This fear exists because we do not know how to live. It is linked to the blocked *mūlādhāra*, because of which we do not live our life; we only fantasize about our life. We fantasize about our life with greed and we fantasize about our death with fear.

Once we know how to lead our life without fantasies, the fear of death disappears. Then suffering and misery dissolve automatically. We move from the demonic into the divine realm.

Here Lord Krishna explains the same concept in a deeper way, and gives a beautiful punchline.

Many take shelter in pleasures and pain that end only with their death. With some, even at that time, it doesn't end. They think of the money they paid for insurance, casket, marble gravestone, etc. They regard gratification of desires as the sole objective in life.

Many people ask me, 'Swamiji, in the Gita, Krishna says that the last thought before death determines how we are born in the next birth. Can we find a way to have good thoughts at the time of death?'

I agree that this is a practical question. Unfortunately, there is no practical answer. There is a word called *vāsanā* in Sanskrit that refers to our mental attitude. *Vāsanā* is built up over our entire life from childhood, some of it even from before birth. It is the accumulated software of our mind that drives us; it is our operational system, the Microsoft Vista equivalent in our mind-ware.

Vāsanās are the compilation of all our value systems and beliefs that define our mental attitude that in turn drives our actions. Unfortunately, *vāsanās*, along with their counterpart *saṁskāras*, memories, are part of our unconscious mind and we have no easy way to access them. Therefore, we have no means to control them and make things happen the way we want them to. It is as if we are on autopilot, with our *vāsanās* and *saṁskāras* driving us through life until we die.

The nature of the unconscious mind is to react to the senses. We may think we respond consciously. But almost all the time our reactions are instinctive, decided

by *vāsanās* and *saṁskāras*, rather than by conscious application of our rational mind. This is what Krishna refers to as the nature of a demonic person. Instinct is the nature of animals, and because it is their nature, it works well for them. They flow with nature.

Instinct is not the nature of humans. Human consciousness can rise to the intuitive level, in which awareness results in high action. This is the potential of the Divine inherent in all of us. Instead of rising to the intuitive level, the super conscious level, most people find it easier to descend into the instinctive or unconscious level.

Adi Shankaracharya says beautifully in Bhaja Govindam,

*angam galitam muṇḍam daśanavihīnam jātam tuṇḍam
vṛddho yāti grhīva danḍam tadapi na muncati āśā piṇḍam*

‘The body is worn out, hair has turned grey; the mouth has become toothless and in old age a stick is needed for support; yet the person is still full of desires. There is truly no end to desires.’

The problem is that we do not know how to fulfill desires. We go through peaks of emotions goaded by our desires and then slip into valleys of depression and guilt. Our emotions are not authentic because they do not touch our inner core. If we intensely experience these events born out of desires and perceived by our senses, we find that neither the peaks thrill us nor the valleys sadden us. We don’t need to suppress or ignore these emotions; we can experience them fully without differentiation and move on.

How many times have we found that what we see and hear turn out to be not what we understand them to be? Our senses interpret what they sense in the light of *vāsanās* and *saṁskāras*. There is nothing real about what we see. Different people perceiving the same object or event have different interpretations based upon their conditioning. So it is with pleasure and pain. What is pleasure for one person can be pain for another. What is pleasure for one person causes pain to another person.

We rush towards pleasure and away from pain. We are so eager to fulfill our desires that we go to any length to amass wealth and do any deed, however questionable it may seem. As Krishna says, this goes on until we die. If we expect that we will suddenly be filled with thoughts of the Divine at death, even though our whole life we chased only pleasures, this is another foolish fantasy.

If all our life we have been chasing money, at the point of death also, we will be obsessed with money, even if we realize that we can't take it with us. If all our life we have been obsessed with lust, we will die in lust. If we live as a demon, focused on 'me', we cannot suddenly take the leap to 'You' at the point of death. That does not happen.

Q: Swamiji, the cow is considered sacred and divine in Hindu religion. If it is based on *ahimsā* (non-violence), then no animal should be killed. Why the cow alone? Why not other animals?

All life is sacred, whether human, animal, plant or whatever else. In *vedic* times, it was primarily a pastoral lifestyle and the cow was an important part of day-to-day life. It was also a measure of wealth. The cow was seen to be giving itself selflessly, leading a 'You' focused existence. Based on these factors, it was given a place of honor and considered holy and sacred.

In a sense, the cow was given a special place of protection. Such protection was not available to all animals. Even if we extended that protection to all animals, what about other living beings, plants, fish and so on?

Only a person who is aware can practice *ahimsā*, nonviolence. The same is true of *satya*, truth. We are not referring only to nonviolence and truth in action, but in thoughts and words as well. Such nonviolence and truth require purity of thoughts, words and action. This can only be done at a high level of conscious awareness.

We are not talking about the moral issue of whether an animal can be killed for food or whether a plant can be consumed as food. It is a conscious awareness when working with nature. For a wild animal like a tiger or lion, it is natural to hunt, kill and eat a deer. There is nothing immoral about it. That is the law of Existence. A lion or a tiger needs to kill other animals to survive.

That is not the case with humans. When a person is aware and conscious, he will not have the desire to consume meat. Nonviolence lives in that person. If one extends that logic to plants, the practice in ancient times was to use plant material only when it was ready to fall, like a fruit from a tree and so on. So, in ancient times, the concept of nonviolence was extended to plant life as well.

In our present day lifestyle, this may not be possible. We do not live nearby trees. In a few generations from now, children may ask, 'What is a tree?' In the same way, modern city children ask about a cow. They have never seen one!

This is where the concept of *aparigraha* or living within one's basic needs, comes into application. When we limit our consumption to real needs, minimal needs, we stay within nature's tolerance limits. However, as a rule, man is greedy. What rules him are his wants, not his needs. While nature can meet the needs of all beings, it cannot meet the wants of even a single person. We need to live with the higher consciousness that respects nature.

People ask why we insist on Nithya Spiritual Healers being vegetarians, teetotalers and so on. We insist on this only for their good. The meditation through which Nithya Healing works cannot tolerate the energy of meat, alcohol, tobacco and such substances. They act negatively on our energy.

These restrictions are not based on moral considerations. My recommendations are based purely on energy considerations. These substances such as egg, meat, alcohol, tobacco and other toxic substances act adversely on our energy system.

When we meditate and grow in awareness, our need for these substances drops. In the USA, we conducted a special program for those who wanted to pursue meditation for self-healing, yet did not want to give up meat, alcohol, etc. After following the meditation practice, many found that they no longer wanted to consume these substances! They then returned for advanced healing programs, fully prepared and committed to the conditions of no meat, no alcohol, etc.

This is what happened. With meditation, body awareness increased. They started listening to their body. Constantly our body cries out to us to stop abusing it with these toxins. The problems begin when we do not listen to its calls. Now these healers have listened and stopped consuming these toxins. Their consciousness has blossomed.

If man blossoms in his consciousness, he is God; he is bliss. He is in *nityānanda*.



Sensory Trap

16.13 They think: This has been gained by me today; I shall fulfill this desire; I have this much wealth and will have more wealth in the future;

16.14 That enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others also. I am the Lord. I am the enjoyer. I am successful, powerful, and happy.

16.15 I am rich and born in a noble family. Who is equal to me? I shall perform sacrifice, I shall give charity, and I shall rejoice. Thus deluded by ignorance,

16.16 thus confused by various anxieties and caught in a net of illusions, one becomes too deeply attached to sensory pleasures and falls into hell.

Krishna does not let go. He wants Arjuna and mankind to understand how deeply the human psyche is damaged by the ego.

Shankara defines *āhāra* or food, in one of his commentaries, to mean all sensory inputs, whereas traditionally *āhāra* is translated as food. Food, as we normally understand it, is what the mouth consumes. This is the sustenance upon which the physical body feeds and grows. Many live only to eat, but a few aware ones eat only enough to sustain them, so that they can live.

Every sensory organ has its own *āhāra*, inputs, upon which it feeds. Based on these inputs, the eye, ear, tongue, nose and skin develop their desires and convey these desires to the body-mind system. Control of these senses and the desires that they weave is what Sage Patanjali prescribed as *pratyāhāra*, one of the eight methods of his Ashtanga Yoga.

Pratyāhāra is not suppression of the senses. *Pratyāhāra* is not starving the senses. Just as we need to eat in order to live, the senses need inputs to function.

However, these inputs can be regulated so that the fantasies they weave are kept in control.

The average human is led by his senses; he does not lead his senses. His *karmendriya*, the organs of action that are responsible for movements are driven by these senses without the need for input from the conscious mind. Instinctively, they avoid pain and welcome pleasure.

A small story:

Two friends met in the street. One of them looked sad and almost on the verge of tears. The other one asked, 'What happened? Why do you look so sad?'

He replied, 'My uncle passed away three weeks ago. He left me fifty thousand dollars.'

His friend said, 'That's not bad.'

He continued, 'Two weeks ago my cousin died and he left me ninety thousand dollars.'

His friend cried, 'This is great!'

He went on, 'Last week my grandfather died. He left me a million.'

His friend asked, 'Then why are you so sad?'

He replied, 'Because this week, nobody died.'

Understand: Once we allow our mind to get driven away by the senses, there is no stopping. We won't know how to make it stop either. So we continue with our fantasies. We fantasize about accumulating wealth. Unfortunately for us, the purpose of gaining wealth is rarely to enjoy it. If that was the reason, all we need to do is to gain some wealth and then spend it on enjoyment. In most cases, the *joy* of acquisition becomes the drive for the person rather than the joy of using the wealth. It has nothing to do with what one can do with the wealth. It has to do with how much more we have than all the other people that we know.

The day our neighbor buys a new air-conditioner, the temperature in our house goes up! The day our neighbor buys a new car, our car, which till that day ran well, will stall. As soon as we see another woman wearing the latest style shoes, our shoes that had fit absolutely fine, start pinching.

We are driven by comparison and envy. We are not merely fulfilling our needs, we are actually fulfilling other people's wants and desires. From childhood, we are taught to grab. Nothing we have is enough. Nothing fulfills us. Until death, we are driven by greed.

In our second-level program, called the Nithyananda Spurana Program, NSP or Life Bliss Level 2, participants are led through a meditation on desires. They write everything they have always wanted. They sometimes write pages of desires. They are asked to remember these. They are then led through a meditation and at the end of the meditation, they are asked to recollect all the desires they wrote.

To their surprise, they recollect only a few. Those that they recollect are mostly those that benefit people at large, rather than them alone. The meditation process is designed to dissolve *samskāras*, the accumulated unfulfilled desires. What remain are the original desires with which one is born. These are called *prārabdha karma*, desires with which we assume our present bodies.

Our body-mind system carries within it the energy required to fulfill the desires that we were born with. Nature, as Mahavira and other great masters have said, brings us into this world having already made sure that all our needs will be fulfilled. However, we develop wants and desires that we borrow from others; these are not our needs.

People are surprised that over time, they lose interest in the drive to have more material possessions after this shift. It no longer makes sense to them. They develop a sense of detachment. At the same time, they find that what they really want happens, without effort on their part. Ask our healers who must go through NSP before I ordain them as healers. They have become less greedy, less judgmental, less negative, and more focused on others. Yet they find that things happen the way they want them to, even though they only spend a fraction of the time they used to on chasing material possessions.

Many Nithya Healers graduate into *ācāryas* or teachers and into organizers the of Nithyananda Mission activities. They spend more and more time on the mission, and less and less time on their own work. People are amazed to see that with much less time or effort invested, they do better at work and their businesses and their careers!

This is no surprise to those who understand the way Existence works. Existence is waiting to shower us with all that we need. The problem is that we never stop to understand what we need. All the time we are caught in the web of our sensory fantasies, and we run after what others own; we let our senses lead us. After

doing these programs and becoming healers, these people spend more time meditating and being aware of who they are. They develop an understanding of their real needs. It is no longer necessary to run after empty wants. What they need comes to them; their needs follow them.

I tell them again and again, 'Do not get stuck in my form. Do not run after me. Do not chase me. Just devote yourself to the mission, which is for universal benefit. Focus only on serving the mission. Then, I will run after you. I shall chase you to be with you.' Many quickly understand this. To them it makes no difference where they are and where I am physically. Wherever they are, I am with them. It is not a mere theory or illusion. Ask them. It is real.

Once we move from the 'me' focused demonic state into the 'you' based divine state, we no longer need to worry about creating wealth, developing a power base, establishing relationships or whatever else we have focused attention upon all our lives. Existence takes care of all this. Existence takes care of us.

If instead, we are focused on our own self, 'me,' be sure, we are moving in a downward spiral that Krishna says takes us into hell.

Q: Based on our education, many of us believed that science had all the answers. Even when science did not have answers to what the scriptures said, rather than denying science and accepting its limitations, we denied what the scriptures said. Thanks to you, many of us understand the truth behind the scriptures.

There is a huge difference between fact and truth. Science, history, and all these logical creations are interested in only facts. Facts are limited by one's understanding, limited by the perceptions of one's mind. Fact is three-dimensional; it is limited in size, space and time.

Truth is forever. It is not limited by size, space and time. When masters say something, it may not be relevant to what exists at that point in time. It is a part of their cosmic experience that transcends time and space.

Time and again disciples tell me, 'Swamiji, we could not understand what you said a year or two ago. It made no sense because it had nothing to do with what we could see as reality. Now we see everything happening exactly the way you said long ago.'

We can understand many things that are beyond the mind from conscious awareness and experience. They cannot be proven by logic and experimentation.

When I say that I leave my body every night, it sounds like a madman's tale to a non-believer. However, close disciples know the truth.

Life is more like magic than mathematics. It is a mystery, insoluble, unfathomable, inexhaustible. It is a miracle that we cannot understand. Science tries to demystify it. As science has become more powerful, people have become more irreligious, for the simple reason that they think they already know what it is all about. And they know very little.

Science gives facts, not truth; it talks about objects. Yet the real substance is our subjectivity, our consciousness, and science is ignorant of that.

So as not to accept defeat, science goes on denying this. But it cannot deny it. Even the scientist knows perfectly well that *he* is, and he is not an object. In fact, without *him* there would be no science. Without the observer, nothing would be observed; the object exists only because there is a subject.

That inner subjectivity is a magical phenomenon. It is unbelievable. One can experience it and one can be in tremendous awe. That awe is spirituality, that wonder is the Divine.

Spirituality fills our life with more and more mystery. Even things that were never mysteries turn out to be mysteries. A rose flower, a pebble on the shore, a bird in the sky, all these become mysteries. Science demystifies, spirituality gives us back the whole mystery of life.

If we look from the outside, man seems to be another animal. But this is only a sensory perception, since we are used to seeing things from the outside.

If we want to know the human being, we must look from within. Humans have consciousness. The human nature is centered within. Our senses keep dragging us to the periphery of our being. Our true nature pulls us back to our center. As a result, humans become eccentric. We constantly move from the peripheral senses to the central reality and back. We swing like a pendulum.

Meditation is the bridge from the periphery to the center. It is a commitment to discover our inner nature, a commitment to make self-discovery the central focus of our life. If we are decisive, the very decision starts the process of our transformation.



Cast into Suffering

16.17 Self-complacent and always conceited, deluded by wealth and false pride, they perform superficial sacrifices in name only, without following the vedic rules or regulations.

16.18 The demonic person, consumed by ego, power, pride, lust and anger, becomes envious of the supreme personality of godhead, who is situated in His own body and in the bodies of others, and blasphemies against Him.

16.19 Those who are envious (of Him) and cruel, who are the lowest among men, I repeatedly cast into the ocean of material existence, into various lowly, demonic forms of life.

16.20 These foolish beings attain repeated birth amongst the species of demonic life. Without ever achieving Me, O Son of Kunti, they sink into the most abominable existence.

Krishna has said in other verses that He will receive anyone with compassion and redeem them. Here He says He will cast them aside into suffering. How do we reconcile these two positions?

Both positions are true! After all, every word that an enlightened master utters is true. It is our understanding that needs to improve.

Krishna is compassion incarnate. Anyone who surrenders to Him is redeemed, liberated. That is the absolute truth. The problem is that we only pretend to surrender. What we have are mere words. Our thoughts do not match our words, and our words do not match our actions.

People come to me and say, 'Swamiji, we surrender to you. Please help us and relieve us of our suffering.' When I tell them to attend the meditation program the following week, they say they need to check their appointment book!

Is this surrender? Does this have any meaning? It is sheer hypocrisy, trying to involve the master in a conspiracy of our own making.

There are a few people who take foolish risks despite my warning; they say that they have faith in me and that they will be saved. A few years ago, on our Himalayan trip, such an incident happened. We were staying at Gangotri, where river Ganga takes shape. We planned to go to Gomukh, the source of Ganga the next day. Gangotri is about 12,000 feet high and Gomukh is a difficult and dangerous climb of another 3,000 feet. At the discourse the night before, I announced that I had decided not to climb to Gomukh as I felt the strong possibility of landslides, which are common in that area.

Usually I give people a choice. They need to exercise their free will. I told my followers that I would not be going because the weather would be bad; however, if anyone felt that they must go, it was their choice. We had eight buses with about thirty people in each bus. Each bus had a leader who kept track of his group and one person coordinated all the buses. It was understood that everyone should keep their group leader informed of their whereabouts, since the mountains could be treacherous.

The next morning I casually asked someone whether anyone had gone to Gomukh. That person did not know. I called the overall coordinator. He said no one had told him they would be going. However, one person had said the previous night that he planned to go despite my warning and he would surrender to me to ensure his safety!

About ten people went to Gomukh that day without informing their group leaders. There were land and snow slides along the way. They returned safely.

If these people had really surrendered, they would have listened to my warning and not gone. What perversion of surrender is that when someone goes against my warning and still says I should take care? This is how many of us behave. We hurt others, harm others, we do all kinds of nonsense which we know we should not; then we go to a temple and pray that everything should be okay. How can it be okay? Why should it be okay?

Every action has a reaction. That reaction is what we commonly call *karma*. Forget all philosophical, metaphorical and spiritual significances. Common sense tells us that if we do something there will be a consequence. Ninety percent of the time we know the consequences in advance. And still we claim we make rational decisions.

Why then make God or master responsible for our rational decisions?

If they have faith in me, why don't they listen to me in the first place? Why do things I advise against and then say that their faith in me will save them? Is it to test me? Is it to make me responsible for their foolish deeds?

The point is that as human beings we have free will. The problem is that we feel free, yet we are unwilling to exercise our will. People ask whether they are controlled by destiny or free will. I tell them that no destiny binds them; they are free to exercise their will.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad puts it so well: as are your thoughts, so is your will; as is your will, so your action, as are your actions, so is your destiny.

Destiny is nothing but the end result of how we exercise our free will. The problem is, we have no will; in the morning we want to do one thing, by noon it is something different, by night it is totally different. So, if our will keeps changing, how can it ever be converted into action?

People tell me, '*Swamiji*, you say visualization helps make things happen; we have tried: nothing happens.'

Nothing happens because you are full of self-contradiction. If we wish to get rid of back pain, and we keep saying, 'Let this back pain go,' it will never go. Every time we utter the words *back pain*, our mind latches more firmly onto the concept of pain. If we want to get rid of pain, we must visualize health, not pain, not getting rid of pain, but feeling healthy.

When we surrender to Krishna, our surrender must be total. There can be nothing between Him and us. Then, He surely liberates us. Because then we are already liberated, we are in Krishna consciousness.

Here, He talks about people who feel no need to surrender to Him. They are so full of ego, that they feel He is their competitor. He says He will cast them into the material world. In this material world, they can follow their senses, sense objects and what they consider to be sensual pleasures till death. As I said before, it is our decision. Even Krishna is helpless to change it, because He has given us the power to decide. He has handed over the decision to us; to decide whether we want to be 'me' or 'you' focused: demonic or divine.

Saying again and again, 'I believe in what Krishna says,' has no meaning. It does not help. Faith does not mean belief. Belief is not trust. Belief is a pseudo-trust,

imposed, cultivated out of fear. It is not something that has grown from within us. Rather, it is something that has been implanted by others: society, religion, the state. They have their own interest in creating belief in people. Believers are obedient. Believers are not rebellious. Believers remain stupid; they never grow in intelligence. And society does not want people to be intelligent.

Society can tolerate intellectuals but not the *really* intelligent. It can tolerate professors, scholars, educated people and knowledgeable people. They are intellectuals, not wise, not intelligent, because if they were intelligent they could not cooperate with all the hypocrisies that go on in the name of tradition, culture, civilization and religion. They would rebel.

Society has a vested interest in belief. Society creates belief. It is a poisonous phenomenon. It destroys intelligence; it destroys independence and rebelliousness. It creates hypocrites. The 'yes' of a man who cannot say 'no' is always powerless. First a man must learn to say 'no,' only then does his 'yes' have meaning.

Faith is different from belief. It is a totally different phenomenon. It is not social. It is individual. Others do not give it to us. It is of our own seeking. It grows in us as we start trusting Existence. It arises not out of fear, but out of experience, out of love, out of joy. Faith is tremendous freedom, and infinite bliss.

With faith we grow. We grow in love to a master and to *God*. Most of us look to God as a person to pray to, to worship. We feel God is a third person. He is not us. Prayer and worship become important pathways to reach this form. The moment we drop the idea of a person, prayer disappears; instead, meditation becomes significant.

In prayer, we worship God. In meditation, we *become* God. It is easy to resort to worship, as it is external. We are used to focusing on externals. Meditation is going inwards. So, it is more difficult for many who are educated rationally. That's why meditation never became the central core of religion in the West. In the East all the great masters founded their teachings on meditation. They taught followers to turn inwards. They taught them to be God, not to worship God.

Meditation leads us to surrender. Meditation is the creation of awareness. Awareness is the knowledge that we are one with the universe. It is then about 'you' instead of 'me'. The feeling of 'you' and the absence of 'me' dissolve the idea of 'I' as identity. This is the foundation of surrender.

This is what Krishna talks about in this chapter. The courage to move from 'me' to 'you' is the courage to trust, love and surrender. When that happens there is nothing else but Him. We become Krishna.

When we are one with the universe, one with Krishna, there is nothing else we need to look up to. There is nothing else to look for. We have reached eternal bliss - *nityānanda*.

Q: Swamiji, many religions refer to love as the noblest of all emotions. Is love the same as surrender?

Yes, love is indeed noble. Yet most of us do not know love. What we think of as love is either lust or a cunning tool to demand attention. For most, love is business.

As long as love is conditional, it cannot be noble. For humans, unconditional love is almost impossible. To be unconditional, love can have no expectations. Even a mother loves her child based on expectations. Perhaps not when the child is an infant and there is an instinctive need to protect. Once the child grows up there is almost always a condition attached to the nurturing.

Many parents complain that their children are doing whatever they please. They say they love their children and cannot bear to see them ruin their lives. When I ask them how they are ruining their lives, they say either that the boy or girl plans to marry someone they love or they want to work instead of getting married.

Who is getting married? Is it the father and the mother, or the child? Why would they ruin their lives if they married on their own or decided on a career? It is all the expectations of the parents that the children should do as the parents demand. Why? Parents do not *possess* their children just because they brought them into this world.

This attachment and these expectations do not allow us to express love unconditionally.

Nonetheless, love is the ruler of all emotions. Learn only two things: meditation and love. For some, the emphasis will be on love; meditation will be a support. For others, meditation will be the main key; then love becomes the support. Both are needed; the question is of emphasis.

If your emphasis is going to be on love, love the Whole, love the entire world. Let your love be undivided and undifferentiated. Let it be like the sun who warms all, saint and sinner alike. Love is the most luminous phenomenon but one needs totally different eyes to know it, to see it, to feel it. Ordinary eyes cannot look at

it. Our eyes can look at matter, not energy. They are capable only of seeing the peripheral and superficial. They have no capacity for the core and depth.

Love is an emotion that arises from your core. As you travel inwards, the more loving you become. In fact, that is the only criterion of whether a person is going inwards or not. If he is becoming more loving to others and towards himself, then he is going deeper. He is coming closer to truth, and he is becoming suffused with the divine energy of Existence.

Love is expressed as compassion when it is at its peak and purest. Compassion is not the expression of the human; it is the expression of the Divine.

At the ultimate peak, at the ultimate depth, love explodes like an atomic explosion. One becomes pure light, light from end to end. That's why this ultimate moment is known as enlightenment. It is a transmutation, transfiguration and a transformation. A totally new being is born that does not belong to time. It belongs to eternity. The mind is conscious of time and space. The heart is not conscious of time and space. Love is centered on the heart.

Seek your heart, go deeper into it, and risk everything for it because nothing is more precious. Even if life is lost but you have attained a moment of glorious love, your life has known fulfillment. You did not live in vain. You lived nobly. A moment of love is more valuable than thousands of lives that are loveless.

Become a servant of love. You then become a master of humanity. One begins as a servant. However, one ends as a master. In this world, you often begin as a master and you end up as a servant. That is the law of the external world. In the inner world there is a totally different law. You begin as a servant and you can end up as a master. You surrender to love, you surrender and love and you shall certainly conquer the world.

Buddha has said: In the outer world everything is sweet in the beginning and bitter in the end; in the inner world, everything is bitter in the beginning and sweet in the end. Only the end matters. Where you begin is not in your control.

Once you understand how to love the people around you, only then can you love God. You cannot hate your neighbor, brother or spouse and love only God. This is impossible. When you start loving those around you, you start loving yourself more. Strangely, you start thinking less about yourself. In your defeat, you win others.

This is what surrender is about: It is asking for your defeat. Let me repeat: Surrender, renunciation of the self, or *sanyās* is a defeat, a defeat of the ego. God is realized the moment the ego is dissolved.

Surrender is the search for the divine principle. Call it God, truth, freedom, or *nirvāṇa*. They mean the same thing. The search is for something that is missing in life. We are alive but unaware of what life is about. We exist, but we are completely oblivious to the fact of who we are.

Existence is there, but awareness is not there. Unless existence becomes aware of itself, life remains empty, unfulfilled. The search is for awareness. Awareness is the divine principle that can transform your life from a mechanical existence into conscious bliss. This search is not done in the outer world; it is done in the inner world. The truth has to be found with closed eyes, within oneself. It is already there; we must dive into ourselves.

Meditation is the art of diving into oneself. Surrender is the courage to take this plunge. One is going into the unfathomable, and in the beginning it is frightening, but only in the beginning. As you become more and more skillful at diving deeper and deeper, life becomes an adventure of tremendous beauty and bliss.



Of Gold And Women

16.21 There are three gates leading to this hell: lust, anger and greed.

As they lead to the degradation of the soul, these three are to be abandoned.

16.22 Those who have escaped these three gates of hell, O son of Kunti, behave in a manner beneficial to the (evolution of the) soul, and thus (gradually) attain the supreme destination.

16.23 But he who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his base impulses attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.

16.24 By the regulations of the scriptures, one should understand what is duty and what is not duty. After being versed in scriptural injunctions, one should act accordingly.

Krishna ends the chapter with this advice: Shed anger, greed and lust and we will be saved. He calls them gates to hell.

These are the qualities of the blocked *mūlādhāra cakra*. These are attributes that bind us to 'me' and 'mine'. We mistakenly believe that these qualities are essential for our life on this planet. Nothing can be more wrong.

As long as we are bound by anger, lust and greed, what He calls the three gateways to hell, we are in bondage; we are in suffering. We do not need to die and be escorted to someplace called hell. We live in it day after day and suffer.

Kāma, *krodha* and *lobha*: lust, anger and greed - when we shed these we are liberated. Ramakrishna says again and again, drop *kāñcana* and *kāminī*, gold and women, greed and lust, and we will be liberated. Lust for women, and greed for gold, these two desires more than anything else, cause all our sufferings.

Krodha, anger, arises out of the suffering. We feel thwarted and we feel angry. The cycle goes on. When these three combine, they create *moha*, or delusion. There is nothing real about *kāñcana* - gold and *kāminī* - woman, because these are impermanent; they cannot give abiding joy. We may feel the pleasure for a while. After that, we will take them for granted. We will be like that king in the story I told earlier, whose possessions had to be robbed before he could come out of his depression.

Management of these emotions is addressed in detail in our Life Bliss Program. We explain the origin of these emotions and how to control them. We teach meditation techniques that liberate us from the harmful expressions of these emotions.

At one level these emotions are desires. Anger, greed and lust are expressions related to desires. Desires are energy. Lust is what drives us into reproduction and it is essential for the survival of species. Greed is the extreme expression of our survival needs. Anger is often the driving force to get things done. They achieve positive results, too.

However, Krishna refers to the expression of these emotions in the context of self-gratification. He refers to the gratification of base impulses. The baseness of the impulse is related to the intention. As long as these are expressed with the attitude of 'me,' they are base and demonic impulses. There are no redeeming features.

Lust can be transformed when it is expressed in an unselfish and unattached way. Lust will then totally disappear. Compassion and caring will be in its place. Every woman, including his own wife, was 'mother' to Ramakrishna Paramahansa, enlightened master from India. That was the extent of his purity and devotion. Of course, such people are exceptions.

People ask me, '*Swamiji*, man has evolved from mammals. Mammals are polygamous by nature. How can we expect human beings to be monogamous?'

Please understand that animals mate to procreate, never for entertainment. Only humans engage in sex for entertainment. That is why there is so much pornography. Animals mate purely for reproduction and the survival of their species. So it makes no difference whether they mate with one or many. They also mate at certain times, unlike humans. Animal lust is pure. There is no fantasy involved when animals mate. No animal fantasizes about another animal when it is mating.

Human beings indulge in sexual fantasies. Their lust is impure. It is corrupted because lust is not used for what it is intended. It is used for everything except

reproduction. How many couples indulge in sex with no thought except that of their mate?

In the Shiva Sutras, Shiva tells Devi that in every couple's bed there are four people. In addition to the man and the woman, there is the man's fantasy of his woman and the woman's fantasy of her man. It is an orgy, not a relationship.

Human beings have the consciousness to rise from polygamous instincts to monogamous intelligence. That is the whole basis of societal regulations. We may look at it as a constraint, but it is a discipline that prevents abuse of one human being by another. Why else is there a need to marry? You can always live like animals and do what you please, if you can.

We can't. Our intellect will not allow us. Our mind will create a thousand fantasies. It will create desire first and then guilt. So we swing from desire to guilt, guilt to anger, anger to depression and so on. It will become a vicious cycle.

Living like an animal is not an option for a human being. Ascent is the natural law, not descent. We need to rise in awareness, not descend into ignorance. That is why, if we are aware, we move from the polygamous instinct to monogamous intelligence. In fact, if we are truly intelligent, our intuition takes us beyond monogamy into aloneness.

Aloneness need not be running off into a forest to meditate. We can be alone in the midst of a family. Being alone is to move to our core. Aloneness is our real nature as a human being. Then we move into that attitude of 'you' instead of focusing on 'me.'

Lust is one aspect of the broad spectrum of desires. Unending desire is greed. When a desire is truly fulfilled, it leaves us. *Karma* is unfulfilled desires that goad us into action. We can never fulfill our desires because many of these desires are not truly ours. We borrow these desires from other people. We need a bigger house, fancier car or younger wife because our friend, neighbor or cousin has one.

Even if we acquire one, the satisfaction will be temporary. We will meet another friend, neighbor or cousin who has a bigger house, better car or more beautiful wife. So it goes on. It goes on without end. There is never contentment. Each desire is the seed of suffering. That is why Krishna calls it a gateway to hell. But how do we get rid of these desires?

This is what we teach at our second level Life Bliss Program, the Nithyananda Spurana Program or NSP. We help identify true desires, the *prārabdha karma*, with

which we are born into this world. These are our true needs, not borrowed wants. We have the energy to fulfill them and discard them. Our *karma* dissolves.

The NSP course leaves us free of negativities. People who attend this program say that they cannot hate or even dislike anyone. The 'I' blossoms into 'you' effortlessly.

At this stage, we shed anger as well. Anger and guilt are byproducts of desires. What we cannot acquire makes us angry. Anger produces guilt. Being angry towards a person is fruitless. Much of the negativity expressed towards others comes back to us. It depletes our energy. Anger or even guilt is also often an expression of one's inability to do something. It is a self-centered emotion born of one's weakness.

Suppression of anger does not help. It can actually lead to chronic diseases like cancer. When we learn to turn the emotion of anger towards an issue instead of a person, it becomes energy instead of a disability. Anger needs to be transformed into the positive energy of action.

What Krishna asks us to do is to transform negative emotions like lust, greed and anger into positive energies. He tells us that these are gateways to hell so long as we use them from the attitude of 'me.' When we transform these emotions into energy, by shifting to the attitude of 'you,' these same emotions become gateways to heaven.

Q: Swamiji, in order to achieve bliss, instead of being caught in temporary pleasures that only result in suffering, is it enough to drop anger, lust and greed?

First of all, bliss is never an achievement on our part. Whatsoever we do to achieve bliss is doomed to fail. All our effort emerges from the mind, it comes out of the ego, it comes out of our anguish, anxiety, desire and ambition; it comes out of our confusion. It can't bring bliss to us. It can bring only misery.

The struggle for bliss becomes one more struggle, like the struggle for *kāminī* and *kāñcana*, women and gold, lust and greed. You only move from one misery to another misery. While you are changing from one misery to another, you may think those intermediate moments are blissful. You feel joy in those small gaps when you change tracks; that's all.

But bliss always comes from the beyond as a gift. We must be passively receptive to it. We are not to be aggressively active for it, just be receptive like a womb. We must be feminine to receive bliss. We must become pregnant with God.

When ego disappears, anger, greed and lust also disappear. What is left is bliss.

Bliss has a luminosity of its own. Misery is dark; bliss is bright. The miserable person casts a shadow on others, too. He comes like a black hole, he sucks people's energy; his presence is destructive. However, the presence of a blissful person is creative, nourishing. It showers light on others.

Bliss is never in the past and never in the future; it is always in the present. Bliss means to be in the present, to be totally here and now. Then one's heart dances and sings and great celebration flowers in one's being: each cell dances, each fiber of one's being sings.

Because bliss is always of the present, one philosopher said that he does not want to go to paradise because he will get bored of bliss! There will be only bliss and nothing else. There will be no misery, no tension, and no anxiety. He does not understand what bliss is; he is simply playing with the word. Bliss is always young: as fresh as dewdrops in the early morning sun, as fresh as a rose opening up. It never grows old and one never grows tired of it, one is never bored by it.

Bliss is that with which you can never be bored, because it is never old. It is always new, and it is never repetitive. It is so fresh every moment, how can you be bored? Hence all the religions say that the angels go on singing on their harps. All that they do is sing, because singing represents joy: they rejoice! This is not a state somewhere above you in the sky. That state is within you. Whenever you are in contact with the present, you are in paradise. 'Now' is another name for paradise.

Bliss is a by-product of total trust in Existence or in God. God is not a person but the impersonal presence. The very life or Existence is God and the living energy is God. And to trust in it means to stop struggling against it. Struggling against it creates misery; it is trying to go upstream. Trust means surrender, going with the stream. And going with the stream is bliss. All misery is because of the ego and its struggle, its resistance. Trust means that resistance has been dropped. You don't think of yourself as separate from the Whole; you are just an intrinsic part of the great harmony of Existence, a small note in this great orchestra. Then bliss is natural.

My whole effort here is to help you move towards bliss. The way to bliss is through the heart and through devotion. That is why in addition to meditation, we engage in dancing and singing devotional songs. These are the ways in which you can be persuaded back to the heart.

Once you are there, once you have tasted the peace of the heart, you will be surprised. The head is left far behind. It is no concern of yours. It is as if it no longer belongs to you, it may be somebody else's head. It is so far away, so distant that you don't even hear the noise. The heart is so deep that the head becomes infinitely distant. Those are the moments when you feel for the first time what bliss is; otherwise it is only a word.

Rarely have people felt the real taste of bliss. People use the word and they think they understand it. They can't understand; it needs some existential experience to understand it because bliss is synonymous with God. Bliss is the ultimate meaning of life.

To feel that one is 'nobody' is of tremendous significance because that cuts the root of the ego. The ego lives through the idea of superiority. And sometimes the ego stands on its head; then it lives through inferiority. However, a person who knows that he is nobody is neither superior nor inferior, he is simply not. And in those moments of non-being, bliss descends.

Without ego, you cannot be miserable. Just try! Nobody has ever succeeded, and I don't think anybody ever will. Without the ego it is impossible to be miserable, just as with the ego it is impossible to be blissful. When there is no ego, only bliss is left.

Ego keeps you restless, keeps you occupied: 'Do this, do that, be this, be that.' It goes on giving you new projects. It never leaves you alone. It keeps goading you. You must become somebody, you must be the president of the country or the prime minister, and you must be famous. You must earn so much money. It goes on goading you till it either drives you mad, drives you to the point of suicide, or drives you to a master!

By dropping the ego, great rest happens. Then there is no need to try any relaxation method; one is relaxed, there is nothing to be tense about. That natural, spontaneous relaxation brings bliss in a flood; one is overwhelmed. And bliss never comes in small measures. When it comes, it comes like a flood; when it comes, it drowns you totally.

Go beyond ego. The very idea is dangerous; ego must be dropped, because the moment you think of yourself as great, you think of others as inferior; it is based on comparison. Comparing yourself with anybody is harmful. It is harmful to the other and to you. Everybody is unique. Nobody is great and there is nobody who is not great. Nobody is big and nobody is small. All are unique, incomparably unique.

This is the spiritual understanding. When one becomes awakened, this is how one looks at people. They are not alike; at the innermost core they are the same, but on the circumference they are unique personalities. A rose is a rose, a lotus is a lotus: neither is the lotus greater nor is the rose greater. Both have blossomed, both express God in their own ways.

Love yourself. That is the beginning, then love those close to you, then love the world, then love the whole cosmos; only then will you be able to love God. The journey begins from one's self and ends in God. These are the two banks of the river. You are on one bank, God is on the other; love is the bridge. The bridge passes over the whole river, but people fear love; that's why they keep praying. They never understand what they are doing; their prayer is ignorance. Unless it is full of love, it can't be true.

Unless you live in love, you can't enter any temple of God; and one who lives in love need not enter a temple, he is already in it. Remember this simple message and try to live it, because this is not a doctrine to be believed in, but a life to be lived. Bloom in love and release the fragrance of love. That is prayer. And only the fragrance of love reaches God, nothing else.

All of you need to become a living message of bliss, not only in words but also in deeds. Your being must radiate bliss. You need to be blissful and you must create an atmosphere of bliss around yourself, so that whomsoever comes in contact with you immediately feels the cool breeze of bliss.

The real message cannot be conveyed through words. Words can help. But they are secondary; the real message can be communicated only through being; that is primary. Be cheerful, be blissful, be a song and a dance, and transform your whole life into a sacred celebration, into a sacred ceremony. This is surrender.

The moment one starts seeking and searching for oneself, one becomes the blessed one. The enquiry itself is the beginning of the transformation. The more passionate the enquiry, the sooner transformation comes. Make it intense and make it total.

Surrender must be a deep commitment. Surrender must become more valuable than anything else in life, even more valuable than life itself. This is one fundamental secret of life and Existence: you live only when you have something for which you are ready to sacrifice your life.

Life begins only when you have something more, higher, bigger, holier than life, in your life. Only when life becomes a means to a higher end, then your life starts having a context. And in that context only, there is meaning, significance, and bliss.

Meditation leads to bliss; it makes it happen. It leads you within and ultimately that's where God is. Slowly learn how to dissolve. Dissolve in any act, then that act becomes blissful. If you jog, you disappear in the jogging and there is no jogger, only jogging remains. Or if you meditate in the early morning, there is no meditator but only the meditating remains. You are so possessed by the act itself there is only the act and no doer inside. Then it is bliss, a blissful dance.

Meditation is the key to bliss. Some people believe that meditation is nothing but a kind of thinking, thinking of higher things. When you think of God, when you think of Love, it is called meditation. No, that is contemplation. It is better than thinking about useless things, but it is not meditation.

Thinking is not meditation. Whether you think of God or money, it doesn't matter. Going beyond thoughts is meditation.

Thinking in any manner about any object is a disturbance in meditation. In the East, meditation means a state of no thought. It is pure Being. That is the greatest experience in life, when you simply exist. No thought crosses your being. The whole traffic stops and the mind disappears. All that remains is consciousness. Whatsoever was hidden behind the thoughts is no more hidden. Whatsoever was involved in thoughts is no more involved. All energy is released. One is simply a pool of energy, and so silent that not even a ripple arises.

Bliss happens if we fulfill one condition, that of being peaceful at heart. And it is not difficult to fulfill. The heart is peaceful; however, we are not there. We live in the head. The head remains with thoughts, desires, imagination, memory; the constant traffic of all these things will be there. It is always rush hour, twenty-four hours a day; the crowd of desires is passing day in, day out.

If you try to make the mind silent, you get into more trouble and become frustrated. That happens to people who don't know what right meditation is. Then they learn tricks to hypnotize themselves. And there *are* tricks available: repeat a

certain *mantra*, chant a certain name and constantly repeat certain words. Any words will do; there are no sacred words, all words are the same.

This is not meditation. Constant repetition of a name creates a state of deep sleep in the head: you fall asleep. It is good, nothing is wrong with good sleep; but it is not meditation and it will not transform you. The real transformation happens when your energy moves from the head to the heart. When you reach the heart, you reach the core of your consciousness.

In that silent pool of consciousness, of energy, Existence is reflected; we come to know that which is. God is another name for that which is.

The most important thing to remember in life is that God loves us: He has not forsaken us, He is not indifferent to us and He is continuously concerned about us, He cares.

The deeper this idea enters your heart, the better, because when you feel more loved by God, you will be able to love others. That's how we are able to love: if we are loved, we can love. If we are not loved, we don't know how to love; we don't know what love is.

God is our substance, our very being. He is not something outside us; He is our innermost core. We do not need to seek and search for Him. Only this has to be remembered: we have forgotten it. God is not lost; only we have forgotten who we are.

Don't be identified with the body. Don't be identified with your mind, country, race or religion. Don't be identified with anything. Don't think, 'I am this' or 'I am that'. Remember, neither 'this' nor 'that'. That is one of the secret teachings of the mystics: *neti-neti*, neither 'this' nor 'that'. Avoid 'this' and avoid 'that,' too.

If you can avoid both polarities, day and night, life and death, body and mind, then slowly a third energy arises in you, a third force arises in you. That is consciousness. That's your reality. That is freedom: freedom from fear, anxiety, misery, freedom from the world, freedom from the wheel of life and death. Then you are a witness, watching, getting identified with neither 'this' nor 'that'; you are a spectator, a mirror reflecting but not getting caught in any reflection.

When you are a witness, the 'me' and 'mine' drop. What remains is identification with your energy, with your state, not your status. In that state, you are one with all. It is 'you' that becomes the focus, no longer 'me'. You become divine.

Let us pray to the ultimate energy, *Parabrahma* Krishna, the divine consciousness, to bless us all with 'daiva sampat' and establish us in eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.

Thank You.

*Thus ends the sixteenth chapter named **Daivāsura-Sampad-Vibhāga Yogaḥ** of the **Upaniṣad** of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.*

BhagavadGita

Sincerity: The Straight Way To Liberation

CHAPTER 17

Living is about experimenting with the truth. It is about
having the courage to experiment with the truth. Just
reading or listening and thinking one has understood it is
meaningless. The understanding must be
applied with courage.



- ◆ Throughout the history of mankind there has been strife based upon one's scriptural understanding and differences in understanding. You say all religions have the same fundamentals. Then why is there always this strife and violence?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you said that *vāsanās* make the spirit choose a new body to be reborn in. Why is there a difference in attitude between siblings? One may be money-oriented, another service-oriented, a third may be power-crazy. And all three are different from their parents. Why is this?
- ◆ You tell us to search for bliss. You and Krishna say that sincerity, courage and faith will take us on the path to bliss. But the path to bliss does not seem easy. There are many pitfalls. We do not even recognize bliss when we experience it. How can we cope?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, the *vedic* science of medicine, Ayurveda recommends food types in line with one's constitution. Are those similar to what Krishna says?
- ◆ You say that God is love. Some cultures depict God in a state of anger and fury. Their monks are serious. They seem to have no humor. Can bliss arise out of anger and fury?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you have said that the path to bliss is a path of aloneness, not loneliness. Can you please explain?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, what are faith, blind faith and belief? These words are used interchangeably when applied to how we should approach God or the master. But these words do not mean the same, do they?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you said that if we give importance to negative thoughts, *samskāras* get embedded in the unconscious zone. Please could you explain further. *Vāstu* consultants recommend changes in home for improving positive energy, balance and if we can't do it, then what?

- ◆ Swamiji, the other day you talked about the question on birth, meditation and liberation, and this whole life cycle of *saṁsāra*. The answer was not given. Could you please provide the answer?
- ◆ Dear *Swamiji*, will a mother's prayers work for her children?
- ◆ How can we differentiate between intuitive and impulsive decisions? In this information age, one's decision directly or indirectly impacts many people. Can you kindly help us understand this?
- ◆ All enlightened masters I have heard about left home for at least a number of years to experience enlightenment. Is this necessary? If not, why did they do it?
- ◆ When everything is divine in this universe, how can there be good and bad, happiness and sadness, lower level and upper level, *jīvātma* (individual self) and *paramātma* (supreme Self), permanent and impermanent, etc. Is it not true only in the eyes of the perceiver?
- ◆ Respected Paramahansa Sri Nithyananda, my love and *pranāms* to you, Kindly answer these questions now or at such time as you feel appropriate. If God is at such a high vibration, as to be unaware of deaths caused by catastrophes, just as a SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) is unaware of the ants it crushes, then does it not follow that God does not hear our cries for help, when we are swept up in these catastrophes? And if that is the case, do our prayers reach God?
- ◆ If *Ātman* or Self is created or is *svayambhu* (self-created), why was the body required for its movement?
- ◆ If *Ātman* is not creating *karma*, and body is creating *karma*, then *Ātman* is only the carrier of *karma*. Is this true?
- ◆ Like Arjuna, I have my own battle to fight, but instead of it being the Mahabharata, it is the 'Law School Court Competition'. I know what must be done, but I lack the focus and energy to accomplish that. Do I lack sincerity? How do I build it?

- ◆ *Ātman* is indestructible, so it is everlasting. From where did it originate? If *Īśvara/Ātman/God* is regulating, is it the same *Īśvara* who made *Ātman*?
- ◆ Dear Swamiji, I have attended your discourses since Sunday. When I am in your presence I feel blissful. I feel lost in your presence. I feel like I have fallen in love with you, in a pure way. I then go home, and dream of you. It is sometimes hard to distinguish if I am at your discourse or dreaming.
- ◆ You said earlier that *smṛti* is alterable and it changes with time. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna talks about the caste system and who can be a *brāhmaṇa*, etc. But in India we have so many problems with the caste system. So, if *smṛti* is properly interpreted, it should not give rise to any problems. Am I correct?
- ◆ There are great ideals in spirituality. What bothers me is that I find a divergence between the ideals and daily life. There is not only caste discrimination, but there are also a variety of other discriminations such as the discrimination against poor people. When a maid comes to work in the house, and she is ten years old and is missing school, my heart aches. That will not happen in the West. I'm not defending the West, but we must be cautious when we make statements about the West. Yes, ours is a great religion. I have great love for it, but have we updated it? Have we moved with time? Whose responsibility is it to make sure we continuously update religion? I also find a great love for materialism, which is against the laws of Hinduism. It is not enough if just great men like you practice the religious ideals, it should be possible for the common man to practice it. How can we say that we have spiritual freedom in the East and not in the West? We need to look at what we mean by spiritual freedom.
- ◆ Respected Swamiji, I am one of the sheep-lion who has forgotten his lion self. Now I want to roar. How?



Sincerity: The Straight Way To Liberation

In the seventeenth chapter, Krishna straightaway gives the methodology or technique to imbibe whatever He speaks in *Śraddhā Traya Vibhāga Yoga*, the Yoga of Discerning the Three-Fold Faith. After all the words that Krishna expressed in earlier chapters, no new teaching is given here. All that Krishna has spoken and taught so far is a prelude to what He is speaking now. Here, Krishna speaks about sincerity.

Let me explain the meaning of the word *śraddha*. Please understand that *śraddha* is not faith; always the word *śraddha* is translated as faith. This is not correct.

Śraddha means faith plus the courage to experiment with the truth. *Śraddha* means faith plus the courage to experiment with what we believe in. With *śraddha* we will never fail. Understand that there is a possibility that we may fail with faith alone. When we have faith without the courage to experiment with the truth, it is like going to a restaurant, reading the menu card and just leaving. We miss eating. We never taste the food. We never experience it. However, when we have *śraddha* with sincerity, there is no chance of missing the truth. A person never misses when he has *śraddha* with sincerity.

Lord Krishna explains and now puts all His emphasis on *śraddha*. After sixteen chapters of teachings, He has nothing new to add. He has said whatever can be said. He has explained all the seven layers of energy. In the fourteenth chapter, He started with *Guṇatraya Vibhāga yoga* - the three *guṇas* (attributes) of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Then in the *Puruṣottama Yoga* He explained the causal layer and the engrams or engraved memories. The deeper layers of the cosmic and *nirvanic* bodies are explained in the sixteenth chapter.

Krishna elaborates on the attributes of the Divine and the demon, the ego or no ego, 'you' or 'me'. He clarifies whether our life should be centered on the attitude

of 'me, me, me' or the attitude of 'you, you, you'. The root cause of our identity that separates us from our core, which is divine, is explained in the sixteenth chapter.

Now Krishna comes to the seventeenth chapter, *Śraddha Traya Vibhāga*. Nothing more needs to be added. Whatever can be said has been said. Now all we need is *śraddha*. If somebody has had a good feast, just like 'house full', his stomach is also full. All he needs is an antacid, 'Digene'. Throughout the chapters Lord Krishna has given Arjuna a beautiful spiritual feast. All Arjuna needs is 'Digene' to digest the whole thing and enjoy. This chapter is 'Digene'. The whole emphasis is on *śraddha*: honesty, truthfulness and straightforwardness.

We may question, 'Why would He devote one full chapter for *śraddha*?' Please understand that we invariably miss enlightenment because of lack of understanding of this subject, *śraddha*. Let me be very clear, it is not that we don't know the truth that Lord Krishna speaks. We know whatever Lord Krishna speaks of and all that He has spoken so far. We know it all. It's not that we don't know. Yet why have we not become Krishna?

We miss one thing - *śraddha*. That's the only thing we need. Our problem is not that we don't know. Our problem is that we know too much and we are unable to digest and implement it.

Swami Vivekananda says beautifully that instead of knowing the whole library, we should know just five concepts. We should experiment with these five concepts with *śraddha*. Let the five concepts become your life. That is enough. Nothing else is necessary. Instead of having the whole library in your head, have the five concepts in your heart. Here, Krishna emphasizes the importance of *śraddha*: how *śraddha* and **only** *śraddha* can transform your whole life. Understand, whatever you believe, if you have *śraddha*, if you have sincerity in the concept, you will achieve the ultimate. Even if you believe in atheism, there is no problem.

Many people have achieved *God* and attained the Truth through the path of atheism. Buddha never spoke of God. He never spoke about God. Yet not only did He become enlightened, thousands attained enlightenment because of Him. In modern times, J. Krishnamurthy did not mention God in his philosophy. He was an enlightened *master*. He radiated enlightenment. In the same way, many other masters, such as George Gurdjieff, became enlightened with no concept or idea of God. What you believe is not important. How intense you are is important.

People use the title *Mahātma* to describe Mahatma Gandhi because he was intense in whatever he believed in. He was sincere to the core. Whatever he believed in, he experimented with the truth of it. The title of his autobiography, *The*

Story of My Experiments with Truth, depicts his life. He experimented with the truth. He allowed the truth to work on him. He worked with the truth. Working with the truth is what I call sincerity. Sincerity is not just listening, reading or believing in the truth. Sincerity is working with the truths. It is straightaway executing them, experimenting with them and having the courage to play with them.

Both meditation and gambling require courage. We need courage for gambling. And we also need courage for meditation. Meditation is the ultimate gamble. With ordinary gambling, we gamble with money. In meditation we gamble with our ego. We gamble with our whole being. But one thing is for sure in the gamble of meditation: if we lose, we win. Only losers win in this game!

In ordinary gambling, the more we get, the more we win. In the gamble of meditation, when we put the ego at stake, we win the whole game. We put our whole ego at stake. Spiritual life needs courage. That is why Swami Vivekananda calls his spiritual disciples '*dhīraḥ*'. *Dhīrā* means someone who is courageous, who is courage personified.

We might ask, 'Why do spiritual people need courage? For spiritual life, don't we need to be silent?' No! Spiritual life calls for courage. To experiment with these truths, we need courage. In the past sixteen chapters we have heard many different teachings, different understandings and so many different techniques. We have heard everything. All of this can help transform our life only if we have the courage to experiment with them. Otherwise they add more weight to our head, that's all.

Please understand that if we receive these teachings and store them in our head, we gain more head weight, nothing else. Now we think, 'I know the Gita.' However, we need to experiment with the Gita. We need to experience it.

For example, if we eat too much food and we are unable to digest it, what happens? We vomit it out. We have a stomach ache and we vomit. Similarly, if we hear all these things and we don't experience it, we will get a headache. We will catch people and vomit all these things on them. Please be very clear that unless we have sincerity, unless we experiment with these truths, listening to these truths is dangerous.

Now I am giving one more step. Here it says, 'If you don't practice, listening to these truths is dangerous.' We may ask, 'Why?' Because now, by and by, even after so many days of listening or reading these great truths, we will start hallucinating that we know, without knowing. That is the most dangerous game.

Never ever get caught in that game!

Spiritual life needs courage, sincerity, and the consciousness of *dhīraḥ*.

A small story:

The great saint, Dakshinamurthi Swamigal, lived in Tamilnadu, South India, near a place called Tiruvaroor. Let me share a historical incident from his life.

A poet from the king's court met Dakshinamurthi Swamigal and was inspired by his presence. Consequently, the poet wrote one thousand songs in the *bharani* style in the saint's honor. *Bharani* is a special style of poetry involving one thousand verses. The rule is that only someone who shows courage and power and kills one thousand elephants in war is qualified to have such a song written about him. Here, this poet was so inspired by the saint's presence that he simply wrote the songs on him on the spot.

The king also considered himself to be *bharani*. I don't know if he killed one thousand elephants in war. He may have just paid a poet to write one thousand songs about him!

Anyway, suddenly, one day in court, out of ego and pride, the king announced, 'I am the only *bharani* in this whole country, in this whole region!' One of his poets stood up and said, 'No O king, you are wrong. Dakshinamurthi Swamigal is also a *bharani*. One of your court poets has sung a *bharani* about him.'

The king's ego was hurt. He said, 'What? Who is this person deserving *bharani*? Bring him here.' The poet said, 'No, no, he is a beggar. He will not come here.' Beggars can never be forced. We can never force homeless people. We can force anybody but a homeless person to do what we want, because he has no desire. We can't do anything about him. As long as someone has some desire, he obeys the social system. So we can't do anything about a homeless person. He does not care for name, home, fame or security. So we cannot bind him. In this case, this man was a beggar and a *saint*. They could not bring him to the king.

The king felt deeply offended. He said, 'What? For a beggar, *bharani*! Which fool sang the songs? Call him to me right now.'

The poet was summoned to the court. The king said, 'Fool, how dare you sing *bharani* for a beggar.' The poet replied, 'O King, please forgive me. Before you say anything, before you abuse that master, it would be nice if you would go to see him.'

The king said, 'What kind of advice are you giving me? Tomorrow morning your head will be cut off.'

That was the king's usual trend, direct violence. Only foolish people immediately express violence. When they can't behave in an intelligent way, when they don't know the truth and they don't have enough energy to convince the other person of the truth, they take to the sword.

Take for example the history of Buddhism or Hinduism. They never converted anyone with the sword. They had intelligence. They converted through logic, analysis and convincing the other person of the truth.

For example, great masters like Adi Shankaracharya and Mandana Mishra had different views on a particular subject, still they did not fight with each other. Shankara did not say, 'If you don't convert to *Vedānta*, I will kill you.' They sat together and analyzed what they knew. It was a loving discussion. It was a beautiful scene. Shankara and Mandana Mishra sorted out their differences with deep respect by discussing without rancor.

The person who acted as judge in the discussion was Mandana Mishra's wife. What a beautiful, loving atmosphere it must have been! Can you believe that the wife of one of the competitors was the judge? Never! And here, Shankara appointed Mandana Mishra's wife as the judge. Bharati judged the discussion between Shankara and Mandana Mishra. And finally, she passed judgment in favor of Shankara. She declared that Shankara won the debate. The whole thing happened out of love. There was no violence, no cutting, no killing, nothing. It was just a simple discussion.

Throughout the history of Eastern religions, there was never any cutting or killing. They never converted through the sword because they did not believe in killing. They had enough intelligence to express the concept. And one more thing, the loser automatically joined the group which expressed the truth more clearly!

When Shankara convinced Mandana Mishra, Mishra dropped everything and surrendered his life to Shankara! He became a disciple of Shankara and took the spiritual name Sureshwaracharya. He followed the path of Shankara's teachings. People who use the sword prove that they are foolish. Because they lack intelligence, they must attack. Those who convert people through the sword prove they do not have enough clarity or courage to perceive the truth. We can never achieve anything by the sword. Only destruction is possible through the sword, never construction.

The king, foolish as he was, straightaway said, 'Kill him. Tomorrow morning the poet should be killed.' The poet replied, 'I have no problem. I have experienced Truth through this master. I am ready to die; however, if you are really intelligent, meet this master at least once. Don't punish me until you have seen him. Then I will be ready to die.'

The king agreed, 'Alright, I will see him. If he is not a real *bharani*, we will kill him also.'

The king set off to meet the master with all his paraphernalia: chariots, foot soldiers, elephants, armies and all his warriors. Kings always travel with their paraphernalia because they lose their identity without their paraphernalia. In contrast, Dakshinamurthi Swamigal was a *paramahansa*, an enlightened master. Masters always live by themselves. They do not need any paraphernalia. This master was an *avadhūt*, which means he never wore clothes. The king found him sitting under a big banyan tree. Without any paraphernalia, he was sitting under the banyan tree and the king arrived with his paraphernalia to see him.

This was the scene: This simple beggar sat in a corner without any clothes. He was in bliss and peace, completely lost in Existence, in *brahmajñāna* (knowledge of the Supreme). He sat in intense silence and peace. This silence penetrated anyone in his presence. The king appeared with his warriors and entire army to confront this yogi who sat in profound silence.

The king jumped down from his chariot and advanced towards the master. The master did not move. There was no movement in him even after seeing the king and his army and hearing all the commotion. He opened his eyes and looked straight into the king's eyes. It was the first time that someone looked straight into the king's eyes. The king had always looked at others straight in their eyes and they had always put their heads down. For the first time somebody looked straight into the eyes of the king. After a few seconds, the king put his head down. The king clearly felt something happening inside his being. He felt like a mere beggar in the master's presence. He did not know how to act. He did not know how to react. It was a strange situation. He was at a loss. He could not decide what to do. He felt overwhelmed.

Dakshinamurthi Swamigal signaled to the king to sit down. There were no words from him. He simply made a sign asking the king to sit. All the ministers and the army dropped their weapons and also sat in silence. In ten minutes the whole army was sitting down. It is impossible to make an army

sit. Even the leader of the army can't make the army sit. That is why they say we must continuously give a task to the devil. If we don't give any task to the devil, it will eat us! Similarly, we cannot make the army keep quiet. But here the whole army sat in silence.

One hour passed. Then two hours passed; three hours; then the evening also passed; one day got over. The master, the king and the entire army sat in silence. Not a single word was exchanged. There were no instructions, nothing. They did not even greet each other. They were merely sitting. Two days got over, then three days got over. Now the master thought, 'This is too much. The poor man and his entire army have been simply sitting for three days without food and even without toilet visits! These people must return to their kingdom, to the palace. The king must take care of the country. He has been just sitting here for three days.

The master opened his eyes and said, 'Now you can go.' The king fell flat at the master's feet, did *namaskār* (obeisance) and came out of the forest.

Then the king summoned the poet and said, 'Leave alone thousand elephants... You may sing for the master praises that you usually sing for the one who has killed ten thousand elephants!'

The poet made a beautiful statement, 'Killing ten thousand elephants is easy. It is not a big deal. You just need the weapons and you can simply kill; however, killing one's mind is the real achievement.'

This master had killed the king's mind. Not only had Dakshinamurthy Swamigal killed his own mind, he could kill anybody else's mind if they sat in his presence. Killing ten thousand elephants doesn't take courage, but killing your mind requires courage.

All we need for real spiritual life is courage and sincerity to experiment with the truth. We typically lack that quality. We listen to everything. Wherever there are discourses and lectures, we go and listen to anyone who speaks. We read all the books. When it comes to facing the reality of putting this knowledge to test, there is no action. Then you tell me, 'For practical purposes, *Swamiji*, we must have our possessions. Otherwise how can we survive in this world?...' You just compromise cunningly.

Compromising is cowardice. Please understand that the person who compromises *never* experiences anything in his life; not only in the spiritual life, even in the outer world life. He can never experience life itself.

Sincerity to experience a single truth is enough. Nothing else is necessary. We don't need to do big things. Please be very clear, we can't call somebody 'a big person' if he does something big. What he does is unimportant; *how* he does it is important.

As an example, the great saint Nammalvar, who lived in Tamilnadu, made garlands for Vishnu throughout his life. He did nothing else. He picked flowers from a garden, made garlands and gave it to God. All he did was make garlands. He became enlightened. So many enlightened masters did not do big things. They did small things in a big way. They had deep trust.

Another enlightened person did not even do that. He did not make garlands to offer God. Instead he threw a stone towards the Shiva *linga* everyday. His name was Sakyanayanar (Sakya refers to the clan of the Buddha, and Nayanar is a name for devotees of Shiva). Somehow he became a Buddhist monk. Because he was a Buddhist monk, he could not worship the Shiva *linga* in public. Yet he had tremendous respect and devotion for Shiva.

In Buddhism, at least one son from every family is given to the monastery at a young age. They bring him up and make him a Buddhist monk. Like that, Sakyanayanar was given away to a monastery. Still, he had deep devotion to Shiva. Everyday he went near the Shiva temple. It was not even a regular temple, it was just a small Shiva *linga* under a tree. From a distance he took a stone, visualized it as a flower and threw the stone at the Shiva *linga*. If someone observed him and asked, 'What are you doing?' he would say, 'I am only throwing stones at the Shiva *linga*.' He would throw the stones and leave that place.

One day when he threw a stone, an old man suddenly appeared and asked, 'What are you doing?' He replied, 'I am only throwing stones at the *linga*.' The old man said, 'No, the way in which you throw shows your devotion. You may be throwing stones, but the way in which you are throwing shows devotion. Tell me who you are?'

Sakyanayanar replied, 'Somehow I was born in a Buddhist family, yet I am deeply devoted to Shiva. Everyday I come and offer my Being to him by throwing a stone. Immediately the old man turned around, gave *darśan* (vision) as Shiva and blessed him with enlightenment.

Understand that what we do is unimportant. Even if we sweep our home, even if we just clean our house, it is okay as long as we do it with complete and intense sincerity in that moment.

Live in the moment.

Understand that spiritual practice does not mean you need to go into a deep forest, hold your nose ten times, and breathe this way and that way. You will only torture yourself. Do anything, but do it with intensity and sincerity. Have courage to express whatever you believe. Have courage to work and experiment with whatever you believe. Whatever your beliefs may be, have the courage to experiment with them.

Don't bother whether the truth you believe is the ultimate Truth. You will never know whether it is ultimate unless you have the courage to experiment with it. Without experimenting, you cannot conclude. If you conclude without experimenting, it is prejudice. You cannot conclude without experimenting. All you need is courage to experiment with the truth that you believe.

Tamil has three words for *satya* (truth). One word is *vaaimai*, which means speaking the truth through the mouth. Another word is *unmai*, which is speaking the truth through your mind or heart. The third beautiful word is *meimai*, which means living the truth through your body.

In Tamil, '*mai*' means body. Truth means living the truth through the body. All of us understand speaking the truth through the mouth and speaking the truth through the mind. However, what does 'living the truth through the body' mean? We have never heard this before.

This is where we miss the boat. We continuously think about the truth. We go on contemplating the truth from morning till night. We speak what we think is the truth. Nonetheless, we forget one important thing: executing the truth in life, living the truth in life. That is where we miss. Living the truth in life is the essence.

Patanjali gives *satya* as the first instruction in his Ashtaanga Yoga. In the set of five disciplines called *yama*, the first discipline is *satya*. This *satya* refers to truth in thought, word and action. It is *vaaymai*, *unmai* and *maimai*, all the three combined.

People ask me how difficult it is to practice one by one, all eight steps of Ashtanga Yoga before reaching the final point of *samādhi*. I explain that Patanjali did not outline these as eight steps. These were eight limbs or eight parallel paths to *samādhi*, enlightenment.

When practiced sincerely, any part or even a part of a part can lead to enlightenment. In reality we cannot practice *satya* unless we are enlightened. We become aware of *satya*, that ultimate truth, upon enlightenment, and not before.

The sincerity with which we practice leads us to enlightenment.

That is why I have said time and again that it is not necessary to have an enlightened master as our *guru* to become enlightened. Any master whom we follow sincerely can lead to enlightenment. Even if we truly believe a stone idol will deliver us into liberation, it will do so.

Our approach, our conviction, our courage and our trust elevate us.

Śraddha is total conviction in what we are doing. There should be no doubt in our mind about the path that we are following and why we are following. All great masters had undivided focus in whatever they did. They never swerved from their chosen path no matter what challenges and problems they faced, including threats to their lives.

Śraddha will also deliver whatever else we need, including material benefits. Here Krishna speaks of spiritual enhancement. We can use the same technique to achieve whatever else we need. *Śraddha* works equally well in material pursuits. That is what I call Quantum Spirituality. Spirituality is not separate from materialism. Spiritual wellbeing is not divorced from material wellbeing. Material wellbeing is part of overall spiritual wellbeing. And that is Quantum Spirituality.

Be very clear, spirituality is not about renouncing everything and going off to a forest or a mountain. If we do this without cleansing our mind, we will only live our fantasies in the forest or on the mountain. We need not go anywhere to practice spirituality. We can stay where we are and enjoy whatever we have, without regrets and guilt. All we must do is give up and renounce our fantasies about what we do not have.

To accomplish this, to focus on what we have, to enjoy what we have and to renounce greed and expectation, requires courage, determination, single-minded focus and discipline. It requires *śraddha*.

Understand that the ultimate step or the straight way to enlightenment is honesty and sincerity towards our beliefs. Whatever we believe is not the issue. We must have the courage to experiment with it.

Q: Swamiji, you said that spirituality is no different from materialism. This is not what I have been taught. I shall be grateful if you can explain.

I define spirituality or spiritual wellbeing as the combined wellbeing of body, mind and being. To be spiritually well means you are well physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and materially as well, fully content with all that you have and all that you experience.

There can be no spirituality in discontent. Unfortunately, all of us are discontented with whatever we have. Whatever may be our possession, we seek something more, something different. Discontentment is the cancer of our being.

For most of us, there can be no wellbeing without material wellbeing. We need to be comfortable and respected in society.

If we transcend that need for name, fame and wealth and seek the life of a monk, it is fine. On the other hand, if we run away from our environment because we are uncomfortable with our poverty or social disrespect, that mindset and discontent follows us wherever we go. Going into the forest will not solve our problem.

Ancient Hindu mythology contains graphic descriptions of how divine beings disturb the meditation of earth-bound sages. The divine beings, the demigods, do not want competition in their space of heaven. Hence it is said that they divert and disturb the focus of these sages by sending celestial nymphs to create lust in them! For this reason, we have graphics today of meditating sages trying to cover their eyes as the nymphs dance before them. Usually artistic representations show their fingers spread out while they are peeping through the gaps!

There is no need for nymphs. Our mind is enough. If we go into the forest to meditate with a disturbed mind, we carry that disturbance from our home to the forest. No one needs to send women to disturb us. If it were true that the demigods sent beautiful nymphs to disturb meditators, half the world would be into meditation! It would be a great motivator! The nymphs are but a symbolic representation of our mental unrest.

Spirituality is easier for rich people and people in power. These are the people who have discovered that wealth, fame and power are transitory. They have experienced the depression of success. They only need to understand that there is something permanent beyond wealth, name and fame.

That is why there were many *rājaṛṣis* in the *vedic* culture. These were kings who were sages, enlightened masters. These were the true masters, not those who sat in forests. These kings, such as Janaka, ruled their kingdom with an undisturbed mind.

As householders, many of you find your life unbearable. Imagine the plight of a king who must manage millions of householders. Yet, these kings ruled with non-attachment.

Such people do exist even today. Many have created wealth for themselves and others and live in a spiritual mode of 'You'. This attitude separates the spiritually minded person from the non-spiritually minded person. Krishna talked about this in the previous chapter. The shift from 'I' to 'You' makes us spiritual. It is not the shift from enjoyment of material things to discarding them. Poverty does not make us spiritual or enlightened. If that were the case, half the world would be enlightened.

This is why I say time and again that to evolve spiritually we do not need to renounce anything that we have. We need to renounce the attachment to what we have and renounce the fantasies we have about what we do not have.

As long as we are content and comfortable with our home, car, wife and children and we do not fantasize about someone else's home, car, wife and child, we will be spiritually well and happy.



Way To Worship

17.1 Arjuna said: What is the mode of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with sincerity, but without following the scriptural injunctions, O Krishna? Is it in the mode of goodness, aggression or ignorance?

Arjuna asks a beautiful question.

Arjuna asks: 'Krishna, those who discard the ordinances of the scriptures and perform sacrifices, what is their position? Is it *satvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*? What is the state of people who don't follow the instructions of the scriptures, the ancient books, and instead worship according to their own beliefs? Is it *rajas*, *tamas* or *satva*? Are they in a peaceful (*satvic*) state, restless (*rajasic*) state or an ignorant (*tamasic*) state?'

Worship can occur at many levels. Arjuna's question is based upon the three attributes or *gunas*. Worship is also dependent on our energy levels. Many people are comfortable worshipping at the physical level, the gross level, through techniques such as *pūjā*, going to temples to worship the deities, bathing in holy rivers, etc. From an energy point of view, these are linked to the earth energy and the water energy.

At another level of energy, one may perform fire sacrifices such as *yajña* or *homa*. These are related to the fire energy. Typically the energy of the fire is transferred to water pots that are placed around the sacrificial fireplace. This water, which is energized by the ritual, is then poured over idols, or sprinkled over people or upon the earth to energize them.

The energy of air can be accessed through breathing techniques such as *prāṇāyāma* or chanting of verses. In the first nine verses of Shiva Sutra, Lord Shiva explains about these types of techniques to Devi, His disciple.

It is possible to access the etheric energy through meditation, though this requires understanding and awareness.

Each form of worship or sacrifice is based upon one's aptitude and inclination. Each of these is guided by scriptural instructions as to how to perform the worship, when and where, etc.

Arjuna asks, 'How important is it to follow these instructions? What happens when one follows one's own inclinations and worships?'

This is an interesting question. A saint in Tamilnadu worshipped Shiva with such intensity that he cut out his eyes and placed them on the Shiva linga. Other masters placed all kinds of material at the altar including raw meat. Ramakrishna placed a thread under the nose of Kali's idol to check whether She was breathing before he offered Her the ritual food!

Many masters have followed their inclination when worshipping their favorite deity. Scriptures never stood in their way of worship. However, these masters were focused on what they were doing. They had *śraddha*. That is important.

Arjuna's query is in this connection.

Q: Throughout the history of mankind there has been strife based upon one's scriptural understanding and differences in understanding. You say all religions have the same fundamentals. Then why is there always this strife and violence?

All religions had the same fundamentals when they remembered the actual teachings of the founding masters. They have the same fundamentals even today with a few disciples who still vibrate with the energy of the masters' words.

All great masters had just a few disciples. Jesus had twelve. Ramakrishna had twelve and Ramana Maharshi had about the same. Only Buddha had many more. But these disciples sat with Him face-to-face to imbibe and internalize Him. Buddha forbade any kind of worship. He was remembered through the symbol of the Bodhi tree for 500 years following His death. Later, they built temples for Buddha.

Moses met God face-to-face and received the Ten Commandments because of his own experience. Moses had the ability to transmit that experience to a few whom he contacted personally, and these people believed him. Beyond that, the Ten Commandments merely became a rulebook to others. It became another set of manuals.

The Ten Commandments as well as the other rules and regulations that followed Moses were no longer the experience and understanding of people who received them. Masters spoke from their loving being while followers acted from their logical heads.

Religions are the rigid structures built by unloving followers, who thrust their partially understood wisdom upon others using fear and greed as their weapons. The wisdom of the masters must be understood in full. Either it is fully internalized or not understood at all. There is no midway point.

Love is the origin of all teachings of these great masters. Compassion was their sign. Unfortunately, religions lost their ability to love. They say they love. They love whoever accepts their religion. This is not love. This is bigotry.

Love is the original religion. It is the root of all spirituality. All other religions are offshoots. Love is the root; all other religions are like leaves or at the most, small branches. Even the greatest religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism are only big branches. These religions are visible, love is invisible.

We can visually see churches and the temples, and we can read the scriptures. Love has no temple and love has no scripture. It is like the roots hidden underneath: it is underground, yet it is the nourishment. Without it, the whole tree dies. Love goes on creating more and more leaves, more and more foliage, more flowers and more fruits. Love is the original religion. Compassion of the founding masters is pure love.

We cling to the branches when we follow religions. Branches may look attractive but they are not the source. A Buddha, a Jesus or a Krishna, goes to the roots; from there, He experiences His own reality of God. And the only way to experience God is to go to the roots of life, of Existence.

Find the roots. Be more loving and you will enter the invisible temple. A root contains all the trees in this world and a dewdrop contains all the oceans because the dewdrop contains the secret of all waters.

If we understand the dewdrop, we can understand everything in the oceans on earth or on other planets. We can understand water itself. Water cannot be anything else; its chemical composition will be the same no matter where it is. That composition is ingrained in the smallest particle.

Man is an atom of love. He contains God because he contains the composition. The composition of man is not physical, chemical or even psychological. Otherwise we would have understood it easily. The composition of man is spiritual. Nobody can tell us what it is. We must experience it on our own. All other knowledge is transferable: physical, chemical, scientific and psychological. All such knowledge is easily transferable. Only spiritual knowledge is not transferable.

The master can give a few hints, just hints; and these too will be vague. Then we must find our way carefully, cautiously. Love is just a hint, but if we follow love slowly, very slowly, we will be surprised that God becomes more and more of a reality to us. He is no more a thought, no more an idea, but almost something that we can touch. The deeper we go into love, the closer we come to God. The day we dissolve into love we have arrived home.

Love is the secret of all religions. In spite of this, people are lost in logic and theology. Is logic about God? Theology is as far away from religion as anything can be. There can be no logic about God, only love. God is in poetry, music and in dance, not in logic.

God is not an idea and cannot be arrived at through logical processes. He is an interior experience, so deeply interior that we must go there alone, absolutely alone.

Bliss is possible for those who know how to love and trust. It is open to those who know how to surrender, how to be loyal and how to be obedient. Bliss is possible when our heart says 'Yes,' and when 'No' completely disappears from our being. Because 'No' is darkness, whereas 'Yes' is light. 'No' is ego whereas 'Yes' is egolessness.

'No' is the way of the unconscious man. 'Yes' is the way of the awakened one. Renunciation is a discipline of saying 'Yes' totally to all that is, and forgetting the language of 'No'. Then great harmony arises. All conflict disappears. All conflict is because of our saying 'No'. 'No' is fight, war. 'Yes' is love. 'Yes' is deep accord with the totality. Bliss is another name of that accord, that harmony.

One attains bliss if one deserves it, if one is worthy. The way to deserve it is to dissolve, not to Be. To Be is a hindrance. The ego is the root of all misery. When the ego is absent, bliss reaches us from every nook and corner of Existence, as if it were just waiting for the ego to disappear.

Ego is a closed state of consciousness: all windows and doors are closed. We then lead an insulated, encapsulated life. Ego surrounds us like a capsule. Ego is

like the egg; there is not even a small window to allow anything to enter. Ego is fearful. It closes itself due to fear and shrinks into itself. This is how we create misery.

Bliss is being in the flow with Existence, to be totally with it. Ego is like frozen ice and egolessness is like flowing water. Only when we are liquid, do we become part of the ocean. Then we don't have any private goal or destination. Each moment is blissful, incredibly ecstatic. The mind cannot comprehend or conceive it. Mind is part of the ego. It only knows how to close; it does not know how to open up.

To love means to surrender. It means to renounce. It means that our whole effort will be to open up to Existence, to the flowers, to the trees and to the stars. How do we open to this beautiful music that fills the whole of Existence? How do we open up to this celebration that goes on and on - flowers dancing in the wind, trees enjoying the wind and the stars, always in a state of bliss? Except for man, everything is in harmony.

Man falls out of harmony because he has consciousness.

Consciousness can do two things: it can create ego and it can create egolessness. If it creates ego, we live in hell. If it creates egolessness, we live in paradise. The whole world is in paradise without knowing it. When man enters paradise, he enters with full knowing. That is the grandeur and beauty of man. And that is the danger also. Because out of thousands of people, only once in a while does someone enter. Others simply keep falling into the trap of the ego.

Be egoless and all the grace of God is yours!

Bliss is by the grace of God. We have forgotten who we are. We are emperors but we dream that we are beggars. We have the whole kingdom of God within our being yet we continue to beg for trivial things. We keep collecting trivial things not knowing that we have infinite, inexhaustible treasures within our being. We are oceans, yet we are thirsty because we have become disconnected from our own selves.

We have become disconnected from ourselves because of our personality. We have become personalities but what we really are is our individuality. We must move from personality to individuality, from the false, the pseudo, to the real and authentic. The search for the authentic is what surrender is about. And it is easily possible, because no matter how disconnected we are, no matter how we have

forgotten it and no matter how long we have forgotten it, it can be remembered in a single moment and immediately we can become connected. Faith is the connector.

Religion is belief, not faith. Ordinarily, faith and belief are used synonymously. They are not synonyms. They are antonyms. They are opposites. The person of belief is not a person of faith. The person of faith knows nothing of belief. Belief is borrowed from others. Faith is our own experience. Belief is of the head. Faith is of the heart. Belief is close to logic. Faith is of the heart. Belief simply means that we have repressed our doubt; we have covered a dark hole of doubt with a beautiful belief, but it is there nevertheless.

This is not the way to eliminate doubt. In fact, it is more dangerous to cover it because we become unaware of it and it spreads inside us like hidden cancer. It is better to be aware of doubt. Then we can do something about it. To forget it and cover it up is dangerous. It can spread all over our being. Christians, Hindus or Muslims, all are only believers. Deep down there is doubt. Their beliefs don't make them spiritual.

Up until now this has been history. The beliefs of people have shed more blood on earth than anything else; Christians destroying Muslims, Muslims killing Hindus and so on. It seems that every religious person is at someone else's neck, ready to kill and murder. The most non-spiritual people have always been the so-called religious leaders. They kill in the name of God.

Beliefs never make anybody spiritual. They make Muslims or Hindus or Christians; however, they do not make anybody spiritual. Beliefs simply cover up our face while we remain ugly deep down inside. Nevertheless, people who believe in our beliefs, the fellow travelers, respect us. They worship us because they are in the same boat as us.

Someone once asked George Bernard Shaw, 'When there are millions of Christians, how can Christianity be wrong?' He retorted, 'If there are so many Christians, one-third of humanity, how can they be right?' Truth has never been a quality of the crowds. Rarely has a man arisen, in spite of the crowd, against the crowd, and attained the peaks of Truth.

Crowds always live in the valleys. And they help each other. They become props for each other. It helps to live with people who adhere to the same beliefs. It makes us feel protected and secure. Faith is different.

There is no need to believe. Don't believe in anything written or spoken, including what I say and write. Live it, experiment with it, internalize it and experience it. When you experience it, it is no longer faith; it is trust. This trust alone liberates.



Don't Torture Me

17.2 The supreme Lord said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three kinds: Goodness, aggression, and ignorance. Now hear about these from Me.

17.3 O Arjuna, the sincerity of each is in accordance with one's own natural disposition. One is known by one's sincerity. One can become whatever one wants to be.

17.4 Men in the nature of goodness worship the deities; those in the nature of aggression worship the demons and those in the nature of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits.

17.5, 6 Ignorant persons of demonic nature are those who practice severe austerities without following the prescription of the scriptures, who are full of hypocrisy and egotism, who are impelled by the force of desire and attachment and who senselessly torture the elements in their body and also Me who dwells within the body.

Krishna explains that the way we worship depends upon our natural disposition, the *guṇa*, attributes that we are born with.

When we are born, we carry within us the *vāsanā*, the essence of the mental attitude from our past lives. This comes with the *prārabdha karma* (unfulfilled actions from past lives) and the *saṃskāras* (deeply engraved memories), that drive our mental makeup and actions throughout our present lives. In turn, *guṇas* or the attributes we are born with are determined.

Many believe that there is an avenging angel who sits at the gates of paradise or hell, as the case may be, keeping accounts of all that we have done in our life. It is as if Saint Peter or Chitragupta waits to pounce on us and read out our balance sheet. Do we think they have no other work to do?

All these stories are creations of religious leaders, who wish to control us out of fear and greed. Just as we relate fairy tales to our children to keep them quiet, these priests and scholars tell us these stories. Some fairy tales are really horror stories about witches and monsters that eat humans, especially young children. No wonder children become corrupted by fear. These stories are fed to them at a susceptible age and at bedtime, a susceptible time.

Hell and heaven are merely stories. Our mind is our hell and heaven. We go through hell *during* this life, not after this life. The fear of what will happen, the guilt that religion imposes upon us, keeps us in hell. Once we let go of this guilt, we shift into heaven.

Our being, our undying spirit, keeps an account of every thought we have and every move that we make. There is no escape from this account keeper. When we reach the end of the road, when our body dies, the spirit plays back all that happened during the journey of life and goes through the pains and pleasures. According to Krishna, the attitude or last thought with which we left our body carries over to our next birth and the next body our spirit moves into.

Do not think that we can do whatever we want during our entire life, and then embrace some wonderfully good thoughts at that last breath before we die. No! However much we try, we cannot be money-minded all our life and switch to chanting 'Krishna, Krishna' as we take our last breath. What we have been all our life takes hold of us when we leave the body as well.

If all our life we were behind money, we will only chant dollars and cents as we die. Our attitude will be about making money and that will be the attitude with which we take birth in the next body. Our spirit looks for a body in an environment that fosters the growth of the attitude with which it left the previous body.

If the attitude is to make money, it chooses a family, location, and culture in which it can be reborn in order to be wealthy. If the attitude is to serve people, it similarly chooses an appropriate family, location and culture to make this happen.

Hence we are born with a natural inclination based upon our last life and attitude. Depending on the attitude, we may have the attribute of *satva* - goodness, *rajas* - aggression, or *tamas* - ignorance as our driving nature.

All societies, religions, faiths, castes or creeds are simply translations of these basic natures or traits or mental conditionings; nothing more. After taking birth on

planet earth, we adopt the nature into which we are born that is according to our past attitude. In our new birth, we settle into a religious belief dictated by that natural attribute.

However, we do not realize that we are a part of the Whole, a fragment of Existence or the supreme consciousness. We do not realize that our true nature transcends all material associations and conditionings. When this relationship with Existence is forgotten, we give energy to our associations in material life. We develop allegiance to the blind rules of some religion. Such an existence is purely materialistic and the association itself is artificial. To come out of this, we must break out of our material bonds and enter the path of Self-realization.

Śraddha here refers to the faith that comes out of good work. Yet pure goodness goes beyond all material acts. It is transcendental. Hence there is nothing like fully good, completely good in material life.

Please be very clear, only a person whose nature is pure goodness can connect with the Divine, with Existence.

An enlightened master goes beyond the three *guṇas* of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. He transcends these attributes because he burns out all his *vāsanās*, *saṁskāras* and *karmas*, of which these *guṇas* are a product. An enlightened master has no bondages. He is not bound by desires, greed, fear or attachment. He is beyond the illusion of material existence. He dissolves into the cosmic energy when he chooses to leave the body and it perishes.

When the energy of an enlightened master is reborn on this planet, when it takes human form, it is imbued with some *satva guṇa*, since all beings in physical form must by nature have an attribute.

Such a being is an incarnation, an *avatār*. Upon realization of the being's enlightened state, that incarnation reverts to its transcendental state of being without attributes or *guṇa*. In some cases, the incarnation continues upon this planet to fulfill the mission that Existence has sent it to accomplish. In other cases, upon realization of its true nature, the incarnation reverts to its original cosmic state.

The classic examples of these two different events are Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Both were enlightened masters who reappeared upon this planet on the mission of Existence, *Parāśakti*. Ramakrishna continued after realization of his state of enlightenment. However, Vivekananda, as predicted by his master Ramakrishna, left his mortal body once He realized his enlightened state.

If a *tamasic* person becomes enlightened, he goes through the stages of *rajas* and *satva* before the realization happens. The transition may happen quickly but it must happen. Valmiki (Indian sage) was a robber who terrorized and killed people. His nature was deep *tamas* with a layer of *rajas*. When he caught hold of Narada and demanded money, Narada offered him the name Narayana. The moment Valmiki uttered the name of the Lord, he was transformed. He shifted to *satva* and became the enlightened master who wrote the Ramayana epic.

Krishna says our style of worship depends upon our nature. A person established in *satva* worships *devatas* (deities, gods) who are peaceful. A person established in *rajas* worships *yakṣas* (supernatural beings) and *rākṣasas* (demons). A person established in *tamas* (ignorance) worships *pretas* (spirits of the dead) and *bhūtas* (ghosts).

Please understand, whatever is your ideal, whatever you hold in high esteem, whoever you follow, whatever you worship, that is your nature and that decides your quality. To decide the nature of youngsters, observe their rooms. Do they have a Swami Vivekananda poster or an actor's poster? Based on that, we can decide their hero.

If we have Swami Vivekananda's photo on the wall, he is our hero. We continuously think of him. We want to become like him. We want to live like him. If we have an actor's photo, we want our hairstyle to be like his. We want to look like him. We want to dress like him and we will work out to look like him. We do everything to become like him.

If we worship the right ideal, we are established in *satva*. If we have Swami Vivekananda's poster in our room, we are in *satva*. If we have an actor's photo or poster in our room, we are in *rajas* and *tamas*. *Tamas* is like watching a violent fighting show. Everyday the shows go on: people fighting with each other, beating and kicking each other like monkeys. I can never understand this. Fighting is a perversion.

Please understand that fighting is a perversion. I cannot imagine thousands of people sitting and watching these fights. How perverted we have become! Please be very clear that if you continuously sit in front of the television and watch fighting, you are established in *tamas*.

Krishna says that based upon our ideal, our *guṇa* (attributes) can be described.

In the last verse, He says, 'Please do not punish your body. You not only punish yourself, but you also punish me because I reside in you!'

The scriptures do not recommend severe austerities and penances. Walking on fire and such other things are unnecessary. When I make you do these things once in a while, it is to make you break the pattern that you have always lived your life in. But you should not subject yourself to these as daily rituals, 'Every morning when I wake up, I should walk on ten feet of fire...' No!

Krishna says there is no need for all these things. People perform them out of pride and ego, merely to show, 'I did all these things.' They are done out of pride and egoism. They are done out of lust and attachment. Some people, for example, sit for years on a bed of nails or sit with one hand raised. All these painful contortions are foolish. These people torture their bodies and the material elements as well as the *Paramātmān* (supreme consciousness) dwelling inside them. Beautifully Lord Krishna says, 'Please do not torture the soul inside your body. Don't abuse your body. The body is the temple of God.'

By torturing the temple of God, you torture the supreme consciousness residing inside. He says that those who torture the supreme consciousness inside the body are demons. Ravana did penance. He cut off his heads and put them into the fire. This is a demon's penance, torturing the body and torturing the supreme consciousness residing in the body. There is no need to do self-torture. Krishna says, 'Don't torture yourself.' God never asked you to torture yourself. These people wanted to destroy somebody all the time. That is why they did these violent things even to themselves. The entire purpose of this penance and self-torture was to boost the ego, to seek power.

No scripture expects or teaches us how to kill others, torture others or do black magic to others. The other day I spoke to somebody about *yantras* as a remedy. *Yantra* is a metal plate with a diagrammatic representation of powerful *mantra* (chant) that is sanctified through rituals. After that lecture someone told me, 'I bought a *yantra*, but when I wanted to return it to the person I bought it from, he threatened to curse me.'

You need to understand that only an enlightened being can curse. Only he has that power. But an enlightened person will never curse. Please be very clear that only an enlightened person can make his curse effective. Others cannot. It is not that anybody can curse and it will become reality. No, only an enlightened person can curse, and an enlightened person will never curse. If he curses, he is not enlightened. *Nobody* can curse you. If he is not enlightened, don't be concerned about it. It will never work because for a curse you need *satya-sankalpa*, the backing of Truth.

Only the words of a person who has achieved the ultimate energy can become reality. I will say again that only an enlightened person can curse, and an enlightened person will never curse. Because the enlightened person is in universal consciousness, cursing another person is the same as cursing himself!

Never be afraid of curses! Nobody can curse you. One thing is sure, if someone curses, he hurts himself more than he hurts others. So never be afraid of curses.

Spiritual relationships can never exist out of fear or greed. Never be obedient to somebody out of fear. Simply throw things out if it is forced on you out of fear. Never be afraid of anything.

Here Krishna says that there is no need for all this penance. Out of pride and ego you cheat yourself with all this penance but you never really achieve anything. The person who does these things out of ego and pride is a demon, a *rākṣasa*.

A demon is in deep *tamas*, in ignorance. All that drives such a person is the boost to his ego without consideration for himself and others. Such a person is a spiritual cipher.

Q: Swamiji, you said that *vāsanās* make the spirit choose a new body to be reborn in. Why is there a difference in attitude between siblings? One may be money-oriented, another service-oriented, a third may be power-crazy. And all three are different from their parents. Why is this?

An excellent question!

Earlier I shared the story of attempting to heal the autistic child when I was in the USA a few years ago. The parents were from India, but not from Tamilnadu and none of them spoke Tamil. I will mention it again since it's relevant to this question.

As soon as I touched the autistic boy, in crude but chaste Tamil he shouted at me to take my hands off him. He did not want to be healed. I was taken aback both with the vehemence with which he said this and also that he spoke in a language that he was unfamiliar with. I asked the boy why.

He said that he had made a deliberate choice to be an autistic being since he did not want to be caught in life's responsibilities. He wanted to work out his *prārabdha karma* (unfulfilled actions from the past) without having to exert himself.

I responded by saying, 'That is fine, but you are troubling your parents who are good people. Why are you making them suffer?'

He immediately replied, 'Do you think I would enter the body in a family that would not take care of me? I was born to them because they are good people and I knew they would take care of me!'

Of course, I did not attempt to heal the boy against the wishes of his being.

The reasons with which a spirit may decide on a body may not be obvious to us. Following birth, the individual also forgets why he chose his body and he also forgets his *prārabdha karmas*. It would be convenient if we remembered what brought us here. Then we could work towards fulfilling those desires! Once fulfilled, our *karmas* would dissolve and our spirit would be free.

Please understand that the entire concept of *karma*, and about doing good and bad, is nonsense. It is only to keep you on a tight leash. That is all. If you think that by giving money to the poor, donating to a temple fund or a preacher's hat will earn merit points toward your entry into heaven, you have been fooled.

When people come to the ashram and want to donate money, I tell them, 'Do not think that this Nithyananda will be standing at the gate when you die to make sure you get a heavenly suite. Nothing like that is possible. There is no exchange offer between what you give now and what you get after death. Only your good attitude follows you if you give with an attitude of unconditional help. If not, even that will not follow you.'

We do not remember why we came here because when we die the spirit passes through the painful and dark Causal layer of energy. In that deep pain, it forgets whatever made it decide on taking the new body. The darkness of the Causal layer as the body dies, the coma state, is equivalent to the dark painful passage that the body passes through as it emerges from its mother's womb. This is the point at which the spirit leaves the dying body, its previous abode, and enters the new abode.

It is possible to remember why you came here, your *prārabdha karma*, and to have a conscious birth. It happens to enlightened beings. It is possible for others as well. I am working on this process. The mother must be trained before the child is born.

In our Nithyananda Spurana Program conducted by our ordained teachers, we take you through the journey that the spirit takes as it leaves the body. You get to experience through specially designed meditations each energy layer that the spirit goes through. There are seven layers and seven meditations. When you undertake this journey, all your past *saṁskāras* which grow from the carried over mindset (*vāsanās*), get burnt out. You become free. You have a glimpse of the ultimate.

During one of the meditations, you understand why you came here. Your *prārabdha karma* stands revealed to you. From then on, if you so choose, you can focus on why you came here. You can then work towards liberation.

Remember this, the character of the parents is only partly related to the *vāsanās* and *prārabdha karmas* of children. Sometimes it can be supportive in a deeply negative way too.

Devotees come to me from all over the world, from North America, South America, Guadeloupe, France, Australia, Malaysia and so on. I tell them that they would not come had they not been born in India and exposed to the *vedic* culture atleast once in their earlier lives! They are coming back to their roots; that is all.

The spirit tries to remember why it came into the body, but does not always succeed in remembering. When it leaves this body again, at that point, it again remembers its desire! This happens many times. After many unsuccessful life journeys, the spirit decides, 'Enough is enough. Now I must seek liberation. I must find my master and savior.' Sometimes the spirit takes on an incurable ailment that leads it to the master. Many people originally came to me only for healing. Healing was their sole excuse that brought them to me. The Being demands that you be liberated and causes the body to suffer until you reach the master.

Coming back to your question, each sibling may be seemingly different, but a thread underlies their dissimilarities in bringing them into one family. It may be a constructive or a disruptive reason, but the spirit came there for a reason.



Believe And Practice

17.7 Food that we consume is of three kinds, according to the three types of material nature. These are sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hear the difference between these three.

Krishna now speaks about food. Three different types of people enjoy three different types of food. Before we discuss these verses, let me explain the three different types of *śraddha* based on what we are.

Please understand that one group of people is completely negative. They only doubt and doubt and doubt. They have decided not to believe in anything. They have decided not to raise themselves in their lives. They remain dumb. We can't do anything with them. This is the first group.

The second group consists of people who believe, but do not practice.

The third group of people believes and practices sincerely.

There are three groups. One group doubts. Even the word doubting is too good to describe it. They are prejudiced. This group is in *tamas*. The next group is the believers. They are in *rajas*. The third group is sincere. This group is in *satva*. Krishna beautifully explains the differences between the prejudiced group, the believers and the sincere group. He then talks about their ways of life, character and how we can achieve the sincerity of *satva* and imbibe the truths explained in the Gita.

He gives beautiful step-by-step explanation and teachings on how to raise us from the prejudiced level to the believing level, and from the believing level to the sincerity level. All those here are already at the believing level.

If you are prejudiced, you will not sit here everyday. You would merely stand there, listen to two or three words and go away. Many people come just to check

out what is going on. They stand here for two or three minutes and look at their watch. And even in those few minutes, their feet will shuffle ten times this way and that, and they will say, 'Alright, enough. I think he is just a young *swami*. What can he say that I do not already know?' They just walk out.

If you are not at least at the level of belief, you will not sit here. Coming regularly and sitting through these lectures shows that you are at least at the level of belief.

Now all you need to do is jump into the level of sincerity. The moment we jump into the level of sincerity, we experience the truth. We become Krishna. We experience Krishna consciousness.

Now we will enter into the technology of experiencing the sincerity, the technology of Krishna consciousness.

You see, there is an important choice that you must make. Either you should be completely sincere and trust what I say as the truth, or be very clear that whatever I am saying is just lies. If you can't practice what I am saying, whatever I am saying is a lie. If you are unable to practice, what is the use of this truth? Whether I am saying the truth or not, you will decide. Only you can decide that. No one else can decide for you. I cannot decide for you. If you can execute what I tell you, if you are able to imbibe it, I am speaking the truth. If you are unable to do it, what is the use of the whole thing? Nothing, there's no use. For eighteen days, it's a waste of three hours of your time and three hours of mine, that's all. If you don't imbibe, if it does not transform your life, then it is only a wastage of time. And whatever has happened here is not the truth.

Please be very clear that the result of my words on your consciousness decides whether what I spoke is the truth or a lie. One more thing you must understand is that you don't need to do it completely or perfectly. Having the courage to experiment is enough. After my talking all these days, if you say, 'Why not test for two or three days?', if you have that much courage, that is enough.

If that doesn't happen, then my sitting and shouting and talking is just like an Indian political meeting speaker! If you are in South India, whether you want it or not, you must listen to some political speaker every year, maybe every month. They air the politician's talk on the loudspeaker throughout the city. No one can escape hearing him.

Let me share a real incident that happened some time ago. One day I was traveling from Pudukottai in Tamilnadu to our Bangalore ashram. We suddenly

started hearing a voice over a loudspeaker. The person speaking used slang words, not a single decent word, except two or three, 'hmmm, hmmm.' There were no other decent words. We couldn't escape from his slang words for ten kilometers, which means half an hour. The roads were also horrible. For half an hour, he was shouting. Unfortunately, we had to drive past the stage where he was speaking. I was surprised that only four ladies were sitting in front of the stage. There were more people on the stage than in the audience!

I asked one *brahmac@ri* (unmarried boy training on the path of *sany@s*) traveling with me, 'What is going on? Why is he using all these slang words?'

The *brahmac@ri* said, 'What is this, *Swamiji*? He is speaking decently. Why are you blaming him?'

I asked, 'Is this decency?'

He said, '*Swamiji*, you have not been present at these kinds of meetings. That is why you call this slang. It is actually decent.'

I asked, 'Then why are there only four ladies in the audience?'

He said, 'Because of the loudspeakers, people can listen to the speech from their homes for a radius of ten kilometers. They don't need to attend the meeting.'

In that political meeting, the speaker told the crowd, 'O dear people who are here, like an ocean you have gathered...' Only four ladies were listening to him and he called them an ocean. And these four ladies were chewing betel nut and betel leaves and spitting on the ground continuously.

These old ladies must have had some arguments with their daughters-in-law at home. Where else could they go after that? There was some entertainment here, so they must have come here.

They must have thought, 'Let us go and sit there. Maybe at the end of the talk, they will give some clothes or gifts. If we don't get anything, we can remove a few flags and take them home. We can use them to clean the house!' This was why these ladies probably decided to come.

A small story:

At a political meeting a politician caught hold of the mike and started speaking. He went on and on and on. Slowly some people left. Then a few

more left. By and by, everyone left except one old man with a shawl. The politician finally felt tired. He stopped and thanked everybody for attending the meeting.

He saw the old man sitting in front of him and said, 'I am so happy that at least you stayed and heard me through.'

The old man said, 'No, I own the mike system. I am waiting to pack up the mike and take it home.'

The politician said, 'Please forgive me, I did not bring a watch. That is why I didn't know how long I was speaking. At least you could have set a clock in front of me, so I would know when to stop.'

The old man said, 'You forgot your watch, but we put up a calendar for you. You could have at least looked at that!'

These politicians become courageous when they speak, especially when they don't have an audience sitting in front of them. They say whatever they want to say. When the audience sits at home, there is no danger of anyone throwing stones at them. So the politicians say whatever they want to say. If there is a crowd in front of them, they don't speak much. They are careful in case people throw stones or create problems. Otherwise, they go on and on and on. It never ends.

Please understand, our meeting will become one more such meeting if we don't have the courage to experiment with the truth that we learned here. If we don't practice, if don't allow Krishna's words to work on us, if we don't work with these words, this meeting will be another political meeting, maybe a polite political meeting. Please don't make this a political meeting. Let these words penetrate you. May you experiment with the truth. If you don't experiment, at least it will be mentally clear to you that this is not the truth.

You might think, 'This *swami* was simply saying what he has read somewhere.' But if you believe this is the truth, you will be here. If you think this is not the truth, you will not be here. You will not come everyday and sit for three hours, even if you do not have any other work to do. You have a television at home. You could have sat in front of the television. There are many other places to go to, yet you chose to be here. You chose to listen. This shows that you think there is truth behind these words. So when you think there is some truth, never wait to experiment with it.

Have courage and experiment. Take one single idea. You don't need to experiment with the whole Gita. Take one single concept and imbibe that to the core. Let your whole being vibrate with that single thought.

Swami Vivekananda says, 'When you commit to a single idea, your blood should boil with that single idea. Even your hair should stand in that direction. Your bones, your thoughts, your body and your mind should all stand for it. Your whole being should be directed towards that concept. Only then success is certain.'

Please understand, take one concept and work with it. If you fail, there is nothing wrong. But have courage to work with it. If you succeed, you will know it is the truth, and you will be liberated. You will have bliss. If it fails, you will know that it is not the truth and you will be clear. You can continue your search elsewhere. So be very clear about it. The basic truth Krishna is telling you is about sincerity.

There are three groups of people. The *tamasic* group is prejudiced, meaning negative. The *rajasic* group believes intellectually. The *satva* group has sincerity. They not only believe, but they have courage to play with the words and ideas as well. Please do not miss the courage. Let these words penetrate you.

Q: You tell us to search for bliss. You and Krishna say that sincerity, courage and faith will take us on the path to bliss. But the path to bliss does not seem easy. There are many pitfalls. We do not even recognize bliss when we experience it. How can we cope?

Bliss is not easy. Nothing worthwhile is easy. You must struggle. That is where *śraddha* comes in. Buddha, Christ and Mahavira also struggled.

The word 'Christ' means to be crowned by God. But Christ had to go through a rare crowning ceremony: crucifixion was the first step. That has always been so and will always be: unless one dies, unless the ego dies, God cannot crown you.

You can be crowned only when 'you are not.'

Meditate on that paradox. When you are, you are as far as possible from God; when you are not, you are God. You reach the crown *cakra*, the *sahasrāra*, the energy center at the top of your head. When you are absolutely empty, God fills you from everywhere, from every direction and dimension. You are flooded. That is the crowning.

Unless God crowns a man, man lives in vain. He does not live. He only exists. And to merely exist is to live in hell. On the other hand, 'to live' is to exist in a higher state of existence. It is a conscious state of existence. A rock exists. The ordinary man believes that he lives; however, he exists like the rock. Only a Buddha or a Christ actually lives.

How should we live? How can we come to this ultimate glory? We can come to it only through disappearance.

Be ready to dissolve. Surrendering to the master is dissolution. Once you are not, everything fits perfectly. A deep harmony arises. When you are not, there are no discordant notes. It is all music and poetry, all celebration.

We always listen to the outside; hence we keep missing the inner voice. And God speaks from our innermost core. In the master we hear the echo of our innermost being. The master functions as a mirror: he reflects our original face. He says what God wants to say to us because we are not ready to listen to our inner Self. By listening to the master we slowly become aware of the synchronicity between the master and our inner voice. We become aware that the master speaks on behalf of our inner Self. That is why surrendering to the master is not surrendering to anybody; it is surrendering to our own center.

We live on the periphery. We live in the mind, and the mind is so noisy that it does not allow us to hear the still, small voice within. A master is needed as a device because we only hear the outside. The master says from the outside what God has been trying to tell us from the inside.

As we listen to the master outside, we start listening to the inner master as well. You slowly become conscious and wonder what is happening. The master says things that you somehow feel to be your own, more your own than your mind and your body. That's why the East calls the master, a God. The East knows why the master is called God. The master represents God. He reflects God because he reflects your reality, your true being.

Being with the master is getting ready to turn in, so that you can close your eyes and look in, so that you can hear what your intuition keeps telling you. And the intuition is always right. The intellect may be right or wrong. It is always either-or and doubt persists. It is never without doubt. But intuition is without doubt. It simply knows. The intuitive person never repents because he never does anything wrong. He simply follows God's voice within him.

It is possible to be blissful without being wise; however, that is not true blissfulness. That is what people call happiness. It comes and goes. It is momentary. And it leaves us in deep frustration and despair. The cost is too much and not worth it.

It is also possible to be wise without being blissful. That type of wisdom is pseudo and false. It is known as knowledge. It is borrowed and so it is a burden. Anything that has not arisen out of our experience is bondage. It can nourish our ego but it cannot reveal our Self. The true seeker must find bliss and wisdom together.

Meditate. On the one hand, you become blissful and on the other hand, you become wise. Both grow simultaneously in a kind of deep synchronicity. In the ultimate state, bliss becomes wisdom, and wisdom becomes bliss.

To be blissful is to be prayerful. All other prayers are formal. You can say beautiful words, but they are only on the lips. Words belong to the mind. The heart knows no words. It is wordless. It is silent. It is full of love, yet wordless. It is cheerful. It can sing, but in silence. It can dance, but in an invisible way.

The head is gross. Hence everything of the head is visible. It is matter. It is machine. The heart is the center of the invisible. It is not matter. It is consciousness. The heart knows how to be blissful, how to be longing. Being blissful opens the doors to divinity.

People typically go to God in despair. That is the wrong moment because when we are in despair we are closed. God is available, but His availability is of no use unless *we* are available to Him.

People remember God when they are in misery. That is not the right time to remember Him. The prayers at that time are more or less complaints against the misery as well as demands and desires for things to be better. Those are not real prayers.

A real prayer has one flavor, that of gratitude. A real prayer has one fragrance, that of contentment. It knows no demand or desire. And because God has given so much and been so gracious, the heart silently bows down to the Ultimate. That is real prayer, the very essence of prayer!

Be blissful and let that be your prayer. God is not far away. He never has been. He is just around the corner. The moment the heart is ready, He immediately

appears. He will not knock on the doors because that is interfering with your freedom. He will not trespass, for He respects human dignity. Unless you invite Him, He will wait.

Prayer is a way of inviting Him. And the best way to invite Him is when you are in a dance, when your whole being is singing, when you are in joy, when every fiber pulsates with celebration. Then He is ready to come in immediately. There is not a single moment's gap: it happens instantly.

Fulfill the only condition: be blissful.

Bliss arises from love. Love is the only real poetry. When the heart is full of love, your whole life is transformed from prose to poetry, from noise to music and from discord to harmony.

A heart without love is a desert. The man with a heart that is without love remains ugly. His approach towards life is prosaic. He has no aesthetic sensibility, no sense to appreciate the beauty of Existence and no awareness to be grateful for all that God has done, for all that the universe is. Only the poet knows how to praise, how to be grateful, how to dance and sing and how to celebrate life and its tremendous blissfulness.

It is such a sheer joy to be. Just to be is enough. It is more than is needed, yet we need to be sensitive to feel it. We need to grow feelers. Learn to grow feelers so that life is no longer a thought but a feeling. Once we have moved from thinking to feeling, there is only one more step, and that is from feeling to being; and that is very simple.

The first step is arduous: we must do a lot to move from thinking to feeling. The second step comes almost automatically; there's nothing we need to do for it. From feeling to being, the distance is none at all. It can happen any moment. The poet can become the mystic at any moment. The real problem is how to get out of our thinking and get more and more into feeling.

Love more. Feel more. Enjoy more so that you can feed your heart. Watch the sunrise, sunset, clouds, rainbows, birds, flowers, animals, rocks, and people - look into their eyes. It is such a multidimensional Existence. Look into every dimension as a poet: to praise and to feel. Be ecstatic!

Much is going to happen. So get ready! And don't be afraid when it happens. The only barrier is fear. When things start happening, we become fearful because

we are moving into the unknown, and the mind wants to cling to the known because the mind is clever with the known. With the unknown, the mind has nothing to say. With the unknown, the mind is at a loss as to what to do. It loses its expertise. It is shocked into silence when it encounters the unknown.

The mind is a great expert as far as the familiar and the known are concerned because mind is memory. It can give all kinds of information about the known. It is like a computer. First we feed the information to the computer. Then the computer is ready to give the information back. It can only feed back what we have fed to it, nothing more. There may be new combinations of the old inputs but nothing is original.

Mind knows no originality. On the other hand, the mind can pretend with the known. It can feel great. It is an expert at that.

A child asked his mother, 'Who is an expert?' The mother said, 'The expert does the same thing that women do, but when women do it, men call it nagging.'

Mind is a great expert, a great nagger. It keeps goading and nagging, 'Do this. Do that.' It opens many alternatives and constantly persuades you, seduces you and corrupts you, 'Go this way. Purchase this. Enjoy that.' It keeps you occupied with the known.

The work that a disciple enters into is with the unknown, the uncharted, and the unmapped territory; so fear will be there. That is the only barrier. In spite of it, we should go on. Let fear be there. It will hang around for a while. When we do not listen to it, it will leave us. It is a great day when fear of the unknown leaves us. From then on growth becomes simple, easy and spontaneous.

This committed journey leads to bliss, eternal bliss, *nityānanda*.



We Are What We Eat

17.8 The foods that promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness and joy are juicy, smooth, substantial and nutritious.

Such foods are liked by persons in the mode of goodness.

17.9 People in the mode of aggression like foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry, and burning, and which cause pain, grief and disease.

17.10 People in the mode of ignorance like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refuse and of impure energy.

Krishna talks about the nature of food consumed by people of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* temperaments.

He explains what kind of food these people like, what kind of lives these people lead and what kind of understanding these people experience in their lives. The most important thing is what kind of understanding they acquire. See, the same words can be understood in many different ways.

The other day, I related the story of a scholar who narrated the story of Harishchandra, a king who sacrificed his wife and child in order to keep his word. At the end of the story the narrator asked two people, 'What did you understand from the story?'

One person said, 'Even if you die, you must speak the truth.'

The other person said, 'If it is an emergency, you can sell your wife. There is nothing wrong with that!'

From the same story, two different understandings arose. In the story of the great king Harishchandra, he gave away his kingdom, sold his wife, and allowed

himself and his son to be killed in order to fulfill his promise and uphold the truth of his commitments. We need to understand the word in the context of its spirit.

A small story:

A monk was sent to Alaska to spread God's word. Before going, the Pastor Father blessed him and said, 'Your rosary and wine will take care of you. Don't worry.' A Rosary is the prayer beads, and wine is given as offering at prayer symbolically representing Christ's blood and sacrifice. 'Rosary and wine will take care of you.'

After one year, the Pastor Father visited the monk to see how the mission work was going on. The monk received him with the due honor.

The Father asked, 'How is the mission work happening?'

The monk said, 'Father, just as you said, the rosary and wine are taking care of me. If it were not for them, I would have died in the cold.'

In the course of their conversation the monk asked, 'Father, would you like a cup of wine?'

Father replied, 'Why not? Please get it.' The monk turned towards the kitchen and said, 'Rosary, bring a cup of wine!'

Words can easily be misunderstood! Please don't miss the essence of the words. It is easy to miss the spirit behind the words, the true meaning behind the words. Experiment with courage. And if you can't, if this is not the truth for you, forget about it. At least you will be free to search somewhere else.

If you think that it is the truth and you don't execute it or experiment with it in your life, then drop it! Otherwise it will become a habit to listen to the truth and not practice it. It will become a mental setup. It is the *most* dangerous mental setup. People ask me, 'Swamiji, should I renounce everything to become enlightened? Should I become a *sanyāsi*, a monk?'

I tell them, 'No. There is no need. Just do one thing. Don't have the mental setup of receiving the truth and not practicing it, that's all.' That is the most dangerous thing that can happen to any being. Please be very clear, receiving the truth and understanding it intellectually without having the courage to practice it is the worst possible mental setup. That is the worst devil or demon that can catch hold of you. So at least have the courage to decide, 'This is not for me because this is not the truth.' If you believe this is the truth, then have the courage to experiment with it.

You have heard many things. Krishna does not say anything new in this chapter. He says only one thing, 'Be sincere.' Sincerity is the straight way. I tell people, 'Honesty is the basic spiritual virtue. Sincerity is the basic spiritual virtue.' First be a gentleman, then you can be a spiritual man. Gentleman means to be honest to what you believe, truthful to the core. Never do anything without being clear about the truth, and never stop doing anything if you know it is the truth. The scientist is courageous enough to go after the truth. Wherever the research takes him, he is ready to experiment.

In the same way, you must become an inner scientist, a spiritual scientist. You must have the courage to go behind the experience within the words. You must be able to play with them.

A small story:

An enlightened Zen master and his disciple went to the river to bathe. Suddenly, the disciple fell into the river and shouted, 'Master, save me, save me.'

The Zen master said, 'You are *ātman* (soul), save yourself. You are God, save yourself.'

The disciple shouted, 'Master, first save me, then you can teach me philosophy. Then you can teach me meditation. First, please save me.'

The master replied, 'Stand up and save yourself.'

The disciple shouted, 'No, No, master, save me. Then you can teach me.'

The master shouted back, 'Fool, I am telling you to stand up.'

The disciple became frightened. Just out of fear, he simply stood up, and realized that the water was only up to his knees!

When you stand up, you understand the whole *saṁsāra sāgara*, the ocean of life. Whatever you consider to be the great worries of your life are not even up to your knee level. They are just up to the ankle level. Because you are lying down, because you never stand up, you think you are drowning; you think you are going to die.

I tell you from my personal experience, if you stand up, you will realize that the water is only knee-deep. Whatever you regard as the *saṁsāra sāgara* (ocean of life) is only knee deep. It is nothing. There is no way it can affect you. But you need courage to stand up.

For example, if the disciple had decided, 'No, no, I am drowning and instead of pulling me out and helping me, master is teaching me impractical things. What kind of a master is he?' If he simply blamed the master, he would have gone with the river.

He had the courage and in a minute, he got the guts to experiment with the master's words and was saved. You need the guts. You need the courage to stand up and see the truth by yourself. It is having the courage to experiment. Nothing will be lost. If something can be lost, it is better to lose it as soon as possible. May you be rid of that thing or situation. If something can be lost by practicing the truth, may it be lost as early as possible. The earlier it is lost, the better for you.

May you flood your being with the truth. Whatever cannot stand, whatever is washed away, let it be washed away. May it be lost from your being as early as possible.

Krishna explains here about the energy of various food substances. Generally, all food that is not from plants i.e., from animal origin, has negative energy. Food that is hot and spicy tends to aggravate desires. Vegetarian food that is fresh and not spicy is ideal for spiritual practices.

In our Nithya Spiritual Healing system, it is essential that the healers become vegetarians and give up substances such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, etc. I have nothing against alcohol or meat. I have no theories about cruelty to animals and so on. Plants also have life, just perhaps not at the same frequency. So if one argues from the point of cruelty to animals, eating vegetables also is cruelty to plants.

The Nithya Spiritual Healing system is based on deep meditative techniques. For the meditative energy to be effective, negative energy substances should not be used. I have seen that these meditations do not go together with meat as well as with tobacco and alcohol. If healers eat meat, smoke or drink, they are affected physiologically and psychologically.

Many people complain that this condition is restrictive. What can I do? To satisfy especially the followers who wish to become healers, I have modified the system for self-healing, which allows them to eat meat, drink or smoke. But the interesting development is that many of these healers drop meat, cigarettes and liquor on their own! After a while the mind-body system rejects these low energy food substances automatically.

Any serious meditation technique requires one to be in the energy field. The word '*āhāra*' used by Krishna can be expanded to mean food for all senses, not merely for the tongue. All sensory inputs need to be of the same description that Krishna uses here, promoting 'longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness and joy' to aid one's progress in one's spiritual path by the *satvic* route.

Q: Swamiji, the vedic science of medicine, Ayurveda recommends food types in line with one's constitution. Are those similar to what Krishna says?

Ayurveda, which literally means the knowledge or science of life, is the ancient Indian system of wellness. Ayurveda is essentially about lifestyle and wellness unlike most other sciences of medicine whose focus is to cure diseases.

The principle of Ayurveda is based upon our relationship with the universe. It arises from the fundamental assumption that we are the same energy as the universe. The Taittreya Upanishad explains the five elements of energy in the universe and how they are interconnected. First, ether or *ākāśa* arose from the universal energy. From *ākāśa*, air or *vāyu* arose. From *vāyu* came fire or *agni*. *Agni* gave rise to water or *āpa*, from which earth or *pṛthvī* developed. Herbs and plants grow from earth and support humans, whose energy is the same as the universal energy.

These five elements of the cosmic energy that exist in foods of plants and herbs sustain all living beings. Ayurveda connects the source of energies, the energies, the carriers of energies and consumers of energies, in a holistic way. Food is therefore an integral part of this system of wellness.

Ayurveda classifies human beings into three types or *doṣas*. Unlike *guṇas* that are the essential behavioral attributes in which we operate, *doṣas* are a combination of the kinds of energies predominant in us. There are three *doṣas* called *vātha*, *pitta* and *kapha*. *Vāta*, for instance, is a combination of ether and air in us. Ayurvedic diagnosis can tell which constitution we belong to and our physical and mental attributes.

Ayurveda recommends different foods for each constitutional type based upon tastes such as sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, etc. These are specific recommendations as to what tastes would be healthy for which constitutions and based on this what kind of vegetables and fruits one should eat and so on. Even cooking methods are specified that can be used to provide wholesome ayurvedic food.

Krishna outlines a more general classification based upon the purity and nature of food. Krishna explains that *tamasic* food, putrid and stale, is forbidden for consumption by *vedic* tradition. The injunction is to eat food within a few hours of cooking. Beyond that, the food should be discarded.

Today we store food in freezers for months! How can we be healthy? Rarely do people eat food within a few hours of cooking. Everything is prepared in advance and then mixed and micro waved. God knows what kind of genetic modification will happen to people who eat only such food.

Eat fresh food. It is not necessary that it be raw as some people claim. Fire and heat are good energy. But you should know what materials should be used as containers. Cooking in plastics can only give you disease, not energy.

We have forgotten how to prepare food and eat it. Soon, children will think that food grows in supermarkets. They will have no knowledge about farms and plants. Even our flowers are artificial. We touch them and the plastic cuts our fingers.

To preserve such food, we need chemicals. How can we stay healthy when we ingest chemicals instead of energy?

We eat on the run. I see people in America walking down the street holding a phone to the ear with one hand and shoving a burger into the mouth with the other hand. They call it multitasking. This is the easiest way to stress, depression and disease. The food that we disrespect so much eventually abuses us. It settles in places that make us unhealthy. Eating an apple in this manner is bad enough; imagine eating a hamburger in this fashion!

Eat fresh food in silence and with attention. Pay attention to each morsel of food and eat with gratitude and love. Eating does not need to be a social occasion. It should not be. Enjoy your social interactions before and after meals, not while eating. Be in the present moment while you eat.

What Krishna says makes pure sense for wellness. Natural foods contain their own flavor and goodness. You do not need to add spices and flavoring agents to corrupt their taste. He says eat food as it comes, fresh from the earth, and cooked with the energy of fire. Eat it while it is fresh. You will be in *satva*. You will be in bliss.



Charity Without Expectations

17.11 Sacrifice without expectation of results, as stipulated in the scriptures, with a firm belief and conviction that it is a duty, is in the mode of goodness.

17.12 O Arjuna, that sacrifice that is performed with expectation of result or for show out of pride, is of the nature of aggression.

17.13 Sacrifice that is performed without following the scripture, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantra, sincerity, and gift, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

Krishna talks about how to give, how to sacrifice and how to serve others.

In the *vedic* tradition, sacrifices such as fire rituals (*yajña* and *homa*) were not mere rituals to worship celestial beings. They had a far deeper meaning of benefiting the living and the poor.

Every ritualistic offering had a major element of gifting the deserving poor. Whoever came to such a ritual never went away empty-handed. When the great *ṛṣis*, the masters, performed rituals, they had nothing to seek. They performed these in line with the truth of their experiences, which were the scriptural understandings. They expected nothing. They performed rituals as a day-to-day living expression. These rituals were conducted so that the celestial beings and nature were pleased and humanity benefited. These were selfless offerings of *satva guṇa* (good nature).

Great kings also practiced these rituals. Kings performed fire rituals to display power and to show that they controlled other kings. These were a display of ego. Kings such as Yudhishtira performed the horse sacrifice, *Aṣvamedha Yaga*, and the *Rājasūya Yāga* to announce their supremacy over other kings. However, these were

required of kings and were also occasions to give their wealth away generously. These were performed in the mode of aggression, *rajas*.

Other extreme sacrifices were also performed by demonic creatures with no concern except brute strength. These did not involve charity or generosity. These did not follow the scriptural guidelines. These were carried out purely for selfish reasons.

When young Nachiketa's father gave away as fire offerings useless old cows that no longer produced milk, the young lad protested. 'What are you doing?' he asked his father. 'Why are you giving away useless things in a sacrifice that is meant for giving away valuable material? If you want to give nothing else, give me away,' Nachiketa said. In deep ignorance and anger, his father offered his son to Yama, god of death, as a result.

Please understand that a sacrifice is not measured by how much we give. It is measured by how much we give that we cannot afford to give. It is measured by how much we give when it hurts us to give and that too without any expectation in return. Such a sacrifice straightaway leads to liberation.

Many people give with wonderful intent. It is not charity if they give part of their wealth without it affecting their lifestyle. It is no sacrifice. Many people tell me, 'Swamiji, I am writing a legal will leaving all my possessions to this ashram, temple or your mission.' What is the big deal in giving away after death? You cannot carry it with you anyway.

A sacrifice must hurt to be genuine. It must cause you discomfort and yet be given with total pleasure and without expectations. That is the spirit of genuine surrender. That is the spirit of doing things without expectation of the fruits of action.

I am not denouncing the wonderful charity that many wealthy people do without posing for photographs. They do it with good intentions of helping the disadvantaged. That mental attitude of giving and sharing what they have with the needy, benefits them. That *vāsanā* of generosity stays with their spirit. There is no doubt in this.

However, that charity will be in the mode of *rajas*, not *satva*. When people move from this *rajas* state of giving to the *satva* state of giving, wealth seeks them out. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth comes to them without being asked! She knows these people will be the route for benefiting mankind.

There is nothing degrading about wealth and power. They are great energies. Like all great energies, the problem is handling them without letting them go to one's head. As an example, look at the difference between Ravana and Janaka. Janaka was a *rāja ṛṣi*, the king who was also a sage. He ruled a kingdom, but treated the power and wealth as if they belonged to someone else. He was a mere keeper, a mere witness. On the other hand, although highly gifted and a great *tapasvi* - who undertook many severe penances - Ravana was ruled by his ego and senses. That brought about his ruin.

The universe operates on the principle of abundance. There is no shortage of anything in the universe. What we need, we get. The trouble is that we are dissatisfied with what we need. Our wants are immeasurable. Great masters have said that it is possible for the universe to fulfill the needs of all the people on planet earth, but not the wants of one single person. Our greed has no limits.

May your desire to give away be limitless. May your desire to acquire become zero. You will be amazed at how wealth seeks you.

Q: You say that God is love. Some cultures depict God in a state of anger and fury. Their monks are serious. They seem to have no humor. Can bliss arise out of anger and fury?

No. We mirror our emotions in God and our mythologies depict him as angry, furious or jealous. God is, in one sense, neutral, as Nature is. He does not care whether you are a sinner or saint. Moral conditions are of no consequence in spirituality.

In another sense, God is compassion. When you approach divinity, you see yourself in others and others in you. At the human level, we term it love. Actually, it is beyond our so-called love.

Love is the energy that can be transformed into joy. And love is the only energy that we have. There is no other energy available. It is the same energy on different planes.

Sex is the crudest form of love energy and God is the highest form of love energy. However, it is the same energy, crude, gross, subtle, hard, worldly, and spiritual. The same energy moves in all planes. It is like a ladder: one end of the ladder touches the lowest whereas the other end touches the highest.

Without love, life would be impossible. Without love, the universe itself would be impossible. Things would fall apart. Love keeps them glued together.

Throughout the ages one of the most basic insights of all the mystics has been that matter is glued together with love. An invisible force keeps atoms and molecules together. They do not fall apart. Science has yet to discover that ultimate energy. It has detected a few of its manifestations such as gravitation or electricity; however, these are gross manifestations. In spite of that, the day is not far off when science will find that the ultimate source of all energy is love. That will be a great day for humanity. On that day spirituality and science will commune with each other because their language will be the same, that of love.

Rejoice because love *is* possible. Be joyful because love is your inner potential. You can rise to the ultimate heights. Nothing is impossible for love because love can transform itself into God.

Love is divine. Lust is animal. Many confuse lust with love. That is one of the greatest calamities. The person who thinks lust is love remains confined to the world of lust and never rises higher than that. He has no idea that there is a higher plane. He remains in the basement of his house. Sex is the basement. It is not the place to live. You can use it for other purposes, but not as your home; your home is above it.

Man has three planes of being. Lust is animal nature. Remember it is the crudest form of love. It is not that love is not present; however, it is mixed, muddy, polluted by jealousy, possessiveness and anger. As it becomes more refined, it becomes human love. Human love is less possessive and jealous. Human love has greater understanding. It is more capable of not using the other person as a means. It is more capable of thinking of the other as an end unto itself.

When it is divine, love in its highest form is prayer. Then there is no possessiveness and there is nothing earthly in it. It becomes an absolutely invisible force. And when love becomes prayer we feel contentment for the first time. In contrast, lust always keeps us hankering and desiring for more sensation, for more thrill and for more adventure.

Human love gives us a little bit of satisfaction. But love as prayer is bliss. It is a cool breeze from the beyond. When it blows, it takes us from the mundane to the sacred. We can open our wings and float with the wind and it takes us to the ultimate goal of life.

Bliss is the way to God. Bliss is the means towards God and it is also the end. It is both the way and the goal. Be blissful so that you can be more blissful. Start by being blissful so that you can end by being totally blissful. Remember: the first step is the last step.

In India people consider the place where three rivers meet as sacred. It is a metaphor because man is a meeting place of three forces: physical, psychological and spiritual. And when these three forces *really* meet, there is great joy and bliss.

Ordinarily we live in compartments: our body lives in one compartment, our mind lives in another and our soul lives in yet another compartment. The body is unaware of the mind. The mind is unaware of the body. The soul is not known to the mind. The body is oblivious of the soul. They *are* together but have not even been introduced to each other.

The first step of meditation is to bring them closer: to introduce them to each other and link them in a deep friendship so that a merger becomes possible. And when all three dimensions merge into one point, the fourth dimension is born. Out of the meeting of the three, the fourth is born. That fourth is God. In India we simply call Him the fourth: *turiya*, the fourth. We don't give Him any name. The other three have names, but the fourth has no name. The fourth is transcendental.

The whole work of spirituality creates an alchemy in which your body melts into the mind, the mind melts into the soul, the soul melts into the mind, and the soul melts into the body. By and by, slowly, very slowly, they become one integrated phenomenon. Hence our work is three-dimensional: we work on the body through many techniques; we work on the mind through many therapies; we work on the soul through many meditations.



Deeds, Words And Thoughts

17.14 The worship of deities, the priest, the guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, living in reality, and nonviolence are said to be austerity of deed.

17.15 Speech that is non-offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular study of scriptures is called austerity of word.

17.16 Serenity of mind, gentleness, equanimity, self-control, and purity of thought are called austerity of thought.

17.17 The above mentioned threefold austerity (of thought, word and deed), practiced by yogis with supreme sincerity, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be in the mode of goodness.

17.18 Austerity that is performed for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for the sake of show, yielding an uncertain and temporary result, is said to be in the mode of aggression.

17.19 Austerity performed with foolish stubbornness or with self-torture or for harming others, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

Krishna defines austerity of deeds, words and thoughts.

Tapas or penance is the austere, simple way of living, the mode of *aparigraha* (simplicity). It is based upon what one needs and not what one craves for. One who successfully practices this is a *tapasvi*.

Krishna explained earlier and repeats here that *tapasya*, austerity or penance, doesn't mean inflicting pain or torturing oneself and others. This includes not merely physical torture and pain, but also takes into account pain through words and thoughts. Penance undertaken in this manner is abusing oneself and the God who resides within, forgetting that the body is a temple of God.

Penance performed out of foolishness and self-torture destroys or injures others. Please understand, such acts are done out of ignorance. That's what I explained earlier with regard to black magic. No black magic can be done. No evil spirit can be sent to you. No one but an enlightened master can curse, and an enlightened master cannot curse. He can only bless.

Forget these negative things. Never be concerned about these things. All such actions are out of *tamas*. They never work and they disturb only the person who initiates them. They can never disturb others.

Lord Krishna says that the people who are in *rajas* carry out sacrifices for the sake of respect, honor and worship. When they do penance or sacrifice in this manner, it is unstable. When people don't respect them, they stop doing it. They do it as long as people fall at their feet. If the respect is lost, they stop their *tapasya*.

Penance performed with the view of obtaining any result... even a noble ideal like enlightenment is a result... is in the mode of *rajas*, aggression or passion. Only when it is in the nature of total surrender, with no expectation of any results, it is in *satva* and of spiritual value.

When I talk about my *tapas* during my days of wandering all over India, I did difficult things. I realize now that many of these could have been dispensed with.

I experimented with ten thousand keys before I found the key to unlock the door to enlightenment. I tell my disciples that they do not need to go through that. There is an easier, faster and simpler way!

As long as I struggled towards enlightenment in my spiritual practices, it eluded me. I was able to realize myself only when I threw away my rosary and the photograph of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa that I had with me all those years, and sat down in meditation, with the feeling, 'let what may happen, happen.'

Here, Krishna uses the word *saumyatvaṁ* beautifully.

We have no exact English translation for this word *saumyatva*. *Saumyatvaṁ* refers to satisfaction and a feeling that is so comfortable. It refers to one whose presence makes you feel totally relaxed, and induces thoughts that calm and center the mind. Please understand *saumyatva* and pleasing words are basic qualities to be practiced by a spiritual person.

Some people become enlightened, yet they can't help others. For example, I saw a great, enlightened swami living in the Himalayas who spent the whole day

smoking *ganja*. No doubt he was enlightened. He put a copper coin in the *chillum* pipe with which he smoked *ganja*. You will be surprised that when he emptied the *chillum* pipe, a gold coin fell out! I witnessed this happen many times. He sold that coin to buy more *ganja*. He lived in Uttarkashi (in Uttaranchal, North India). Of course, I had great respect for him because he was a *tapasvi*, and he never wore any clothes. He was a *nāga-sādhu*.

Nāga means a *sanyāsi* who does not wear clothes. In that cold weather they lived without clothes. They are also called *paramahamsa*. *Paramahamsa sanyāsīs* do not wear clothing except to go into the city to spread the divine mission. Otherwise they are not supposed to wear clothes.

Paramahamsas live like children. When this *swami*, a great *paramahamsa*, emptied his *chillum*, there would be a gold coin in it. I asked him, ‘Baba, you are a great *tapasvi*, an *atmajñāni* (one who has Self-knowledge) and a *brahmajñāni* (one who has knowledge of the *Brahman*), why are you smoking *ganja*?’

He said, ‘A big elephant cannot be tied to a small hut. We must make it a little dull and silent. Only then can the elephant stay in the small hut. After enlightenment, the soul cannot stay in this small body. I must bring it down and make it dull. Then it can stay in this body. To bring it down, I do these things.’ Of course, their smoking is different from an ordinary man’s smoking.

Someone asked me, ‘*Swamiji*, Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna *Paramahamsa* used to smoke. Why can’t I smoke?’

I explained to him, ‘Swami Vivekananda became enlightened before he started smoking. Become enlightened and then you can smoke and do whatever you want. Without achieving what they achieved, doing what they did is wrong.’ Please understand that whatever enlightened masters do is totally different from what you are supposed to do. Actually, they do things opposite of what you are supposed to do. You must do things to elevate yourself. They must do things to bring themselves down!

This *nāga-sādhu* in Uttarkashi is enlightened; however, he cannot help everybody. His type is such he will not help people. He is a mystic. He will not teach anybody and he will not make anybody enlightened. He does not work with people. He is that type.

On the other hand, some people who experience the truth share the truth with the world. Swami Vivekananda and *Paramahamsa Yogananda* were great souls who shared their experiences for the benefit of others. That was their mission.

Bhagavatam says that people who explain or share the truth, such as Krishna, are incarnations.

Sukha Brahma was the son of Vyasa, the compiler of the *Vedas* and author of Bhagavatam and Mahabharata. Sukha Brahma Rishi was an enlightened master who wore no clothes.

Sukha Brahma was questioned, 'What is the difference between enlightened people and *avatārs* or incarnations?'

Sukha Brahma says beautifully: *soundaryatva*, *tejavastva*, *sārasvatya*, and the power, *lakṣmītva*. *Soundaryatva* means that if we see them, we will automatically feel like sitting and listening to them. We will automatically feel like turning around once more to capture their grace! That which simply attracts our mind is *soundaryatva*.

The next attribute is *tejas*, a sharp radiating energy and clarity. The third is *sārasvatya*. This means that no matter how difficult a concept or idea is, they can explain it in a simple way. It merely flows from their tongue where Saraswati (goddess of knowledge) resides.

Above all is *lakṣmītva*. This means that just by their thought, wealth and work will happen. Everything happens according to how they want it to happen. When somebody radiates all four of these qualities, he is an incarnation.

Here, Krishna says the same thing. *Saumyatva*... Please understand, even for incarnations, *soundarya* and *saumyatva* are necessary qualities. Now surely we should imbibe these qualities in our lives.

The penance that is supposed to be done by words, is speaking the truth and speaking pleasing words, *priyahitam ca yat*. Please understand, creating a healing effect through words is important. Creating a healing effect through our words is basic for a spiritual practitioner. We should not utter words that hurt others. Our presence should be healing.

Always use pleasing words. Never use sharp or disturbing words.

One more thing, sometimes we don't understand how our words disturb others. We do not know how our words disrespect or emotionally disturb other beings. We must be careful about our speech.

When we sit with somebody, that person should feel, 'Can I sit for longer time with him? Can I spend more time with him? Can I meet him tomorrow? Will I see him again?' We should create that healing feeling in the other person. People should wait for us rather than run away from us. Usually we create a negative effect. We

create an uncomfortable feeling. People just run away from us. A simple, single word if used improperly, can destroy a whole relationship.

Lord Krishna says a spiritual person should use pleasing words and not agitate others. When we do not agitate others, we will not be arrogant. See, this is not even social morality. This is a spiritual practice.

As I explained the other day, the same words we use to hurt others will hurt us as well. We will use these same words towards ourselves as well. This truth is embedded in the science of energy and vibration. So we must be clear about the words we use. Krishna says to study spiritual literature regularly. By regularly studying scriptural literature, these ideas go again and again into our brain. Consequently, we acquire courage to experiment with the truth. We acquire courage to work with these truths.

I ask you to take up any truth and practice it at least a few times. For example, yesterday I told you not to continuously function based on the idea 'me, me, me'. Instead try the idea 'you, you, you'. Try that at least ten times and see the effect in your life. If it does not work out, you throw it away, it's up to you, but at least try it out ten times. You will glimpse the truth expressed by Krishna.

Intellectuals have two weapons: words and logic. They can be helpful teaching tools if properly used or they can be frightening weapons. It is up to us to choose how to use them: whether in the mode of ignorance, aggression or goodness.

I spoke earlier about Dr. Masaru Emoto, the Japanese scientist, who has shown the enormous power of spoken words. In his book *The Hidden Messages in Water*, Emoto describes his experiments on ordinary water. He spoke to different water samples with different emotions. He then froze the water samples and studied the ice crystals. Those samples to which he spoke with love glowed like diamonds. Those samples to which he spoke with hatred seemed grotesque by comparison.

The pictures are on the Internet. You can see them. If words can have such an effect on water, imagine what effect they can have on humans. We are composed almost entirely of water. That is why words hurt us so much or they heal us so much. Through words we can work miracles.

Krishna talks about austerity in action as well. He speaks about the five conditions that are also in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga as the five disciplines of *yama*: *satya*, *ahimsā*, *asteya*, *aparigraha* and *brahmacarya*. These mean truth in thoughts, words and deeds embodying nonviolence, non-covetousness, simplicity and living in reality with the focus on the Supreme as the ultimate in any kind of penance.

Many feel that the truth must be told even if it hurts. Please understand that if it hurts someone, it cannot be the truth. It is only our perception of the truth. It is only a reflection of our ego presented by our mind as truth. We are not in the truth if we perceive something with our senses and we draw conclusions with our limited knowledge based upon those perceptions, and then express these as our truth and hurt someone. If we do this, be very clear, we are in aggression and ignorance. We are not in the truth. We are not in goodness.

Truth is a reflection of compassion. Truth is an expression of compassion. Truth and compassion always go together. For that reason, truth can never hurt.

Q: Swamiji, you have said that the path to bliss is a path of aloneness, not loneliness. Can you please explain?

The ancient stories of all nations say that God was lonely. He felt his loneliness and created the world. If I were to write those stories, I would say that God was so full of joy, so abundantly rich that He needed somebody to share it with! He needed a whole universe to share it with.

It is not that God was lonely and unhappy and wanted an occupation, so he created the world.' This conclusion has a tinge of sadness. It is as if the other was needed for Him to become occupied, engaged and involved. People suffering from loneliness must have created these stories!

Almost everybody suffers from loneliness at some point in time. And out of loneliness we seek the other. Buddha did not write these stories. That much is certain. Ordinary people who suffered from loneliness wrote these stories. They project their loneliness onto God.

They cannot be happy when they are by themselves. Then they wonder, 'How can God be happy when He is alone?' This is a human projection. They think of God in the same way they think about themselves. They need the other person. They need company. Man needs a woman. Woman needs a man. The other person is a must, otherwise we drown in our own loneliness.

People who didn't know what it is to be God, what it is to be aware and what it is to be awakened must have written these stories. If Buddha had written the stories, they would have a totally different flavor. If a Sufi master had written them, he would write that God was so happy, joyous and cheerful and with so

much laughter, that He wanted somebody to share it with. He simply overflowed and shared it. It was not that He needed the other. He was enough unto Himself, but it was too much. It was unbearable bliss. Hence He created the world!

The path of aloneness is different from the path of loneliness. Aloneness leads to fulfillment; loneliness leads to disintegration. God created this world out of His aloneness, not loneliness. He felt so filled with compassion that He had to share with all beings. He had to gift what He had to everyone.

Everything is a gift out of His abundance. To feel it is to be grateful. To feel it is to be prayerful. Let this be your work upon yourself: feel more and more grateful. Gratitude is the *essence* of prayer. And gratitude is possible only when you see that all is a gift. Each breath is a gift. And what a gift! It is so valuable that there is no way to purchase it. It has no price. You can't purchase life. You can't purchase love. You can't purchase aesthetic sensibility. You can't purchase creativity. You can't purchase intelligence. They are given to us.

Even before you ask for them you are provided with them. Just a little search within and you come upon treasures and treasures. The kingdom of God *is* within you.



How To Give

17.20 Charity that is given at the right place and time as a matter of duty to a deserving candidate who does nothing in return is considered to be in the mode of goodness.

17.21 Charity that is given unwillingly or to get something in return or to gain some result is in the mode of aggression.

17.22 Charity that is given at a wrong place and time to unworthy persons or without paying respect to the receiver or with ridicule is in the mode of ignorance.

Krishna speaks about the concept of *dāna* (charity), which I explained earlier.

Charity is sharing. It is not done with the attitude of giving. It is done with the attitude of sharing and not expecting good results because of it or some easy route into heaven because of it. Charity is done out of love and gratitude.

‘O God, you have given me so much, now let me share a little bit with society and with the world.’ Charity is the attitude of sharing. Charity that is done out of duty, without any expectation means feeling committed to the Whole, to God, and with that feeling; giving as a natural commitment. It is given with the attitude that it is my quality and I have to do it. Only then it becomes real *dāna*. Sharing at the proper time and place and to a worthy person is charity in the mode of goodness.

There are three kinds of *dāna*. Understand, *annadāna* means giving food, clothes and whatever is related for someone’s physical needs. Next is *vidyādāna*. This means giving education and also whatever someone needs for mental growth. For example, when somebody is depressed, if you give him or her some consoling ideas, that is *vidyādāna*. If somebody does not know how to clean a room, and you teach him or her, that is *vidyādāna*. If somebody does not know how to cut grass, and you teach him, that is *vidyādāna*.

And the third kind is *jñānadāna*, giving spiritual knowledge.

If we give *annadāna*, we satisfy a person for three hours. After three hours, again he needs food. If we give *vidyādāna*, education or knowledge, he will have food for himself for one life. If we give education, he can earn food for himself. He will make money and buy food for himself. If we give *jñānadāna*, we will satisfy that person birth after birth! *Annadāna* satisfies for three hours. *Vidyādāna* satisfies the receiver for one life. If we give *jñānadāna*, it fulfills that person for life after life. He will never fall into depression or the ocean of material world, birth after birth.

Jñānadāna is the ultimate charity.

The common expression says, 'If a person needs fish and we feed or buy him a fish, he can be satisfied for one meal.' This is *annadāna*. 'If we teach him how to fish, he can manage his whole life without hunger.' This is *vidyādāna*. This is where the expression stops.

In our Healer's Initiation Program, we tell them to stop eating fish! That solves their problem for many cycles of birth. This is *jñānadāna*!

I tell you, understand one thing, even if you have come and sat here accidentally after looking at my pictures saying, 'I saw a cutout or poster. He is so young. The poster says that he is speaking on Bhagavad Gita. Let me see what he is saying...' Even if you have come just to check it out, and you land up hearing the whole Gita, it will help you. At some point in time, you will remember these truths and execute them. Naturally you cannot be the same person again. At some point in time when you are about to make a mistake, you will remember these truths. These thoughts have gone inside you. They will make you correct yourself choicelessly. This is *jñānadāna*.

The knowledge that you have received now will transform your whole life even if you don't practice it. These words are so powerful that automatically they will start working on you. You will not remain the same person. Your depth of depression will be reduced. Your depth of suffering will be reduced. You will feel that you are entering a new life. Your life will become courageous and a new confidence will enter your life. This is *jñānadāna*. This is the ultimate *punya* (virtuous deed) of giving knowledge. No other good deed is equivalent to giving spiritual knowledge.

Giving food bestows three hours of satisfaction. Giving education gives satisfaction for this one life. Giving spiritual knowledge satisfies souls life after life.

Krishna says when charity is done purely out of a feeling of sharing, it is *satvika*, the ultimate good, the ultimate purity.

One more point is that the person who gives loses nothing with *jñānadāna*. With all other *dāna*, the person who gives has a little less. In *annadāna*, he who gives will lose and he who receives will gain. In *vidyādāna*, the giver does not lose. He retains the same level. In *jñānadāna*, I tell you a secret, the more you share, the more it grows in you! It is a win-win situation. Here, you receive automatically. It grows in the person who shares.

And I tell you another important secret: Don't think you are the only one benefiting by hearing me now. By expressing these things, even I am benefited.

A simple analogy will help explain how this happens. When a woman gives birth to a child, not only is the child born, the woman too takes birth, as a mother. Until then she is only a woman. Once she gives birth, she is called 'mother'. When a child takes birth, not only does the child take birth, even the mother takes birth. Before that she is not a mother. She is only a woman. The moment she gives birth to a child, both the child and the mother are born.

In the same way, when you receive spiritual knowledge from me, I also grow!

That is why in the *vedic* system, they recite the following *mantra* before spiritual lessons:

*Om sahanāvavatu sahanau bhunaktu
saha vīryam karavāvahai
tejasvi nāvadhītastu mā vidvishāvahai
Om śhānti śhānti śhāntih*

This *śhānti* or peace *mantra* means: may we both (master and disciple) achieve perfection. May both of us grow. May both of us help each other. May we not have enmity towards each other.

Understand, the *mantra* doesn't say, 'May you learn.' It says, 'May both of us learn.' The *vedic* system is so humble. To tell you the truth, when I speak, I also learn.

Somebody asked me, 'Swamiji, what are you going to speak about?'

I said, 'Who knows? Just like you, I also sit and listen!'

Here all I have in front of me are Sanskrit verses. I read the verse and speak whatever comes forth spontaneously; that's all. Just like you, I also sit and listen.

Just as you are benefited, I am also benefited. Both of us grow. Only an egoistic person thinks that the disciple is benefited. No! The master also benefits. He can become a master only when a disciple happens!

Only when a child is given birth, the woman is called a mother. Only when a disciple becomes enlightened, the *guru* becomes a master. Otherwise, he is not a master. If the woman is unable to give birth to a child, she cannot be a mother. Similarly, until *you* become enlightened, I cannot be called a master. Be very clear, by sharing this knowledge, I also grow. The person who shares with simplicity and humility, who is very clear and honest about the whole truth of sharing and is not caught in the false ego, his *dāna*, his sharing of thoughts is *satvika* and is related to *satva guṇa* - attribute of goodness.

When you ask questions, if I don't know the answer, I say I don't know the answer. People ask, 'What is this? *Swamiji*, you are enlightened and you say you don't know.'

I tell them, 'Only an enlightened master says I don't know. Only he has the courage to accept the truth. If a normal person doesn't know, he minces words. He puts some words here and there and confuses the audience.'

Confusing the audience is not a complicated job. It is easy because they are already confused! There is nothing more to be done. Just use some words, that's all. And it's not a big thing. Only an enlightened person is courageous enough to say, 'I don't know' when he doesn't know.

To answer a question without knowledge doesn't require enlightenment. It needs foolish hypocrisy. The straightforward, honest approach to the truth is what Krishna calls *satvika dāna*.

Here, in whatever way I experience the truth, I simply express it and share it - honestly, without reservation. That is *satvika dāna* according to Krishna. And He goes on to explain *rajas dāna* and *tamas dāna*.

Many times, the *dāna* is not given voluntarily. Or they may give something away as a part of a ritual. For example, in a Hindu wedding the giving away of a bride is called *kanya dāna*.

Earlier I spoke about people who give their property for charitable purposes in their will. What choice do they have? They cannot carry it with them. In many

cases they may have fought with their children and decided not to leave them anything. Probably the son or daughter did not listen to their arranged marriage proposal and instead married by falling in love. So instead of giving away the wealth to their children, these people give it away as charity. Such acts are not acts of charity. They are done with ulterior motives.

There are others whose charity it is better not to accept. Krishna refers to this as giving in ignorance. People will come with money not declared for tax as earned income and gift that to the ashram. They will use it as a tax saving strategy. What for?

Often, disciples ask why I am not accepting donations from very wealthy people who come to the ashram seeking help. Unless the person stays with me for a year or more and shows his sincerity towards the mission, it is difficult to accept anything from that person. Why become bonded to people whose motives are not merely selfish but self-defeating?

Parāśakti (Existence) guides the mission and She takes care. What She cannot give, no one else can give. What She decides not to give, who else can give?

Q: Swamiji, what are faith, blind faith and belief? These words are used interchangeably when applied to how we should approach God or the master. But these words do not mean the same, do they?

No, they do not mean the same thing. Belief is also blind faith. It is part of your conditioning. It is unconscious, at least most of the time. It is what you learn from others, especially elders. Belief comes from the mind, the unconscious mind. So it is blind.

But faith is different. Faith grows from the heart. It cannot be imitated.

People ask how they can remember me. I tell them, 'If you think I am your master and have faith in me, your problem will be in forgetting me, not in remembering me!'

Faith however does not mean that you imitate the master. You can try to imbibe him, but you have to commune with him by being open, and you have to internalize him. Whatever then happens allow it to happen. But do not force yourself into imitation. Surrender is not imitation.

Each individual is unique; no two individuals are alike. Hence the most dangerous thing in life is to imitate somebody. Imitation means that you will be trying to be like somebody else and this is impossible in the very nature of things. All that you will attain is a phony personality. You will become false. Imitation makes people false.

By becoming a disciple, you enter a different state. It is not based on beliefs and blind faith. You enter a zone of trust. There are no milestones to measure your progress here. There are no prescriptions. There are no guidebooks. It is a path you follow and the destination is wherever the path leads you. Your path is not the same as another disciple's. You are left alone to work out your solution. That is the only way.

Many go through what I call churning. Your conditioning needs to dissolve. So, all old beliefs and value systems come up for review to be re-experienced and relieved. As they surface from the unconscious into the super-conscious state of meditation, those that are not relevant just die out. They burn away in the light of your super-conscious intelligence.

The master is a guide. He helps you to accept yourself as you are and to accept things around you as they arise. Yes, you can keep on fighting trying to change what happens around you. But that never works. This world is not yours to control. Even the greatest of kings and leaders found that out to their dismay. It is more sensible to accept the world as it is. The change must happen within you. The change that you wish in this world needs to happen in you.

When this understanding of acceptance occurs, there will be a great liberation within you. It is a tremendous freedom. It is freedom from time, freedom from mind, freedom from death. Suddenly you enter into the dimension of eternity; suddenly you become a contemporary of God.

This liberation is an experience that happens. It is not learned. It cannot be taught. Yes, you can listen to my words and imbibe my body language to reach there. The effort must be yours. It is your adventure and discovery. When it happens, you sit up in amazement. The world is full of surprises, all only pleasant.

A Zen master was dying. His disciples had gathered. The chief disciple asked the master, 'Master, where would you like to be buried? Will it be your birthplace or under the tree where you became enlightened or here in this place where you are going to leave your body?'

The master opened only one eye, winked, laughed and said, 'Surprise me!' He closed his eyes and was gone.

Each moment is a thrill, a surprise!

Become aware that you have no identity. You don't belong to any caste, creed, state or nation. You are divine. Identify yourselves with God. Discard the idea of 'I'. Go beyond it. Surpass and transcend it.

We need to go beyond body and mind to realize who we are. Self-enquiry is about transcending what we perceive as us. It is dropping what we think as our identity, our name, the various labels we call ourselves, including our relationships as well as successes and failures. If one is identified with the body then one will be afraid of old age, disease and death. If one is identified with the mind, one is again afraid of growing old, losing one's memory and so on. We are nothing less than pure consciousness. We are not the body. We are not the mind either. We are mere witnesses and observers of this body and mind.

Our true nature is not uni-dimensional; it is multi-dimensional. It is like nature; like the colors of nature. In nature, light has seven colors and sound has seven notes. When all the seven colors converge in harmony, white is born. When all the seven notes of music converge in deep harmony, silence is born, and silence is the ultimate in music.

White does not look like color, neither does silence sound like music. White is the ultimate color because it contains all the colors but in such harmony, in such synthesis, that no color shows up; all disappear into each other. In exactly the same way silence *is* music, the ultimate music, but the harmony is so deep that nothing is heard.

Zen masters call it the sound of one hand clapping. You cannot hear anything. When you don't hear anything the ultimate music happens. You just need a little more sensitivity, a little more awareness, a little more meditative feeling. When one starts hearing that which cannot be heard, one comes to know that which cannot be known.

Meditation is a method to hear the sound of one hand clapping and to know what is not known. In meditation we find ourselves. This is the space of the ultimate truth about us. We get to know who we are. This knowledge of who we

really are is enlightenment. Enlightenment is not a goal; it cannot be a destination, simply because we are already there. We just need to become aware of who we are. That is all.

I tell my disciples that when they worship, they seek God. They believe in God and seek Him. In meditation, they become God. They trust themselves and become aware. Bliss flowers when belief evolves into unshakeable faith and trust. Gratitude overflows. The master no longer resides outside. He moves inside you. The ultimate master is the *ātma guru*, the Self.



Thou Art That

17.23 'Om Tat Sat' is said to be the threefold name of the Eternal Being (Brahma). Persons with good (brahmanic) qualities, the Vedas, and the selfless service (seva, yajña) were created by and from Brahma in the ancient times.

17.24 Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity prescribed in the scriptures are always commenced by uttering 'OM' by the knowers of the supreme being.

17.25 Various types of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are performed by the seekers of liberation by uttering 'Tat' (or He is all) without seeking a reward.

17.26 The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of Reality and goodness. The word 'Sat' is also used for an auspicious act, O Arjuna.

17.27 Sincerity in sacrifice, charity, and austerity is also called 'Sat'. Selfless service for the sake of the supreme is, in truth, termed as 'Sat'.

17.28 Whatever is done without sincerity, whether it is sacrifice, charity, austerity, or any other act is called 'Asat'. It has no value here or hereafter, O Arjuna.

In conclusion, Krishna moves on to a different plane altogether.

So far He explained sacrifice, austerity and charity. He clarified what needs to be done and how. He spelled out the different modes based on the nature of people in relation to performing sacrifice, austerity and charity.

Please understand that all kinds of food, penance, sacrifice or charity fall into the basic three categories explained by Krishna - *satvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*. These translate as the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. But the important thing is that as long as they are done in the materialistic world, they are conditioned.

When they are done with the attitude of gratitude to the Divine and Existence, only then you encounter spiritual progress or spiritual elevation. Our scriptures explain that anything done in the nature of *rajas* or *tamas* cannot give the ultimate result. Only the act done in the attitude of *satva* or goodness gives the final result. One who does such acts without this awareness has temporary results but not the final result.

In the days of Mahabharata, sacrificial rituals were a part and parcel of daily life. This is not the case today. The *brāhmaṇas* (highly learned sect of people) were the keepers of the sacred knowledge that connected the physical ritual with the metaphysical truth expressed by the great sages in the *Vedas*. They were the keepers of the flame, in a real sense, since most *vedic* rituals invoked and addressed the fire energy. Sacrifices were directed towards elemental energies and celestial beings. Austerity was directed towards your own self. Charity was directed towards those around you.

The *brāhmaṇas* were expected to lead an austere and charitable life in keeping with the spirit of their profession. In this chapter Krishna elaborates on these concepts so that everyone can move forward on the path to liberation. It is not only for the *brāhmaṇas*, it is also for *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* - the other castes. Any member of any caste is qualified for liberation if he follows these principles. Liberation has nothing to do with birth.

The prime requirement is sincerity, *śraddha*. *Śraddha* refers as well to the understanding that sacrifice, austerity or charity is not directed towards oneself or a material goal. They are directed to the supreme consciousness.

In the last three verses Krishna provides the technique to achieve this transfer of focus from self to Self. He provides the method by which anyone can surrender the results of his activities, the fruits of his action (called *karma phala*) to the Divine. He provides the tool in the form of the invocation, *Om Tat Sat*.

The three words *Om Tat Sat* are the words of the Divine — *Om iti etat brahmano nedistham namaḥ*, shows the first goal, the beginning. *Tat tvam asi* indicates the second goal, the continuation. *Sat eva saumya* is the third goal or final result. All three combined give the words *Om Tat Sat*.

This is why these words have such great importance or significance. Any person doing charity or work with the attitude of addressing *Om Tat Sat* will be with Existence, the divine consciousness.

These three words simply imply: 'I offer all to that Truth. I surrender everything to that Divine. Let that be the Truth.' This is the *mahā vākya*, the great truth, handed down by the master to Arjuna as the technique to ensure sincerity in all activities of sacrifice, austerity and charity.

Please understand that any action, whether penance, charity or sacrifice, has no meaning when the purpose is not to achieve the Ultimate, the Divine.

The final aim in all the *Vedas* is to gain the experience of Krishna or the supreme consciousness. No success, fulfillment or happiness is possible without following this principle.

The *guru* or spiritual master is the only being who can help you and guide you to make your life successful and fulfilled.

Understand, people are conditioned to worship all kinds of deities or demi-gods or spirits right from birth. This is simply because their nature is from one of the three *guṇas*. Among the three *guṇas*, *satva guṇa* is considered the best and higher than the other *guṇas*, namely *rajas* and *tamas*. But the path of achieving the ultimate consciousness, the understanding of Krishna, goes beyond and transcends all three *guṇas*.

This is where the role of a *guru* or spiritual master is important. He directs and leads you on the path of proper understanding for an experience of the ultimate consciousness. Such an understanding, such a perception, leads to faith and ultimately to love of the Divine. This is the purpose and final goal of life.

Let us all pray to *Parabrahma* Krishna with all sincerity to give us the experience of this chapter of the Gita that leads to attainment of the ultimate consciousness, *nityānanda*!

Q: Swamiji, you said that if we give importance to negative thoughts, saṁskāras get embedded in the unconscious zone. Please could you explain further. Vaastu consultants recommend changes in home for improving positive energy, balance and if we can't do it, then what?

If you can't do it, then forget about it. Nothing wrong.

You see, if you give importance to *vastu*, *vāstu* automatically becomes alright. *Vastu* means consciousness. Change *vastu*, then *vāstu* automatically changes. *Vāstu* is

a great science of enclosing the ether energy in the optimum way in the structure of your homes or other buildings. But nowadays, so many unnecessary rules have been added to it and it has gone to extreme foolishness. So whatever you can do, do, otherwise don't bother, just change the *vastu*. That is enough! Changing *vastu* automatically changes *vāstu*.

Just bother about *vastu*, then *vāstu* automatically takes care of itself.

I tell people, *vāstu* is one or two volts of electricity. *Vastu* is 1000 volts of electricity! Just change the *vastu* and *vāstu* will change. I have spoken extensively on *vāstu* and the science of outer space and inner space in the lecture, *From Place to Space*.

If you are interested in *vāstu*, I have given scientific explanations in that discourse. I reveal how *vāstu* is a science as well as how you can change *vāstu* and balance the energies without changing anything in the house. If you have interest in *vāstu*, listen to the discourse *From Place to Space* for more details.

Q: Swamiji, the other day you talked about the question on birth, meditation and liberation, and this whole life cycle of *saṁsāra*. The answer was not given. Could you please provide the answer?

Understand, I spoke about the question so that *you* would think about it. The question cannot be answered. The question is a technique to create seeking or quest in your being. The question is not supposed to be answered. You must find your own answer. *Ātman* or Divine is the answer. However, with this word what will you understand?

Is the questioner here today? Tell me. The reason for birth, meditation and liberation is consciousness, Divine, God. Now I have answered. What have you understood?

Nothing, one more word, that's all. At the most, you can look up the meaning of the words in the Oxford Dictionary and face more confusion, nothing else. Understand, the question cannot be answered. You must experiment with this question. May you contemplate on this question. May you be disturbed by this question! Then you will achieve the state wherein you will never be disturbed by anything!

Q: Dear Swamiji, will a mother's prayers work for her children?

Not only for her children, it can work for the whole world. You can pray for the whole world. It will work.

Q: How can we differentiate between intuitive and impulsive decisions? In this information age, one's decision directly or indirectly impacts many people. Can you kindly help us understand this?

The moment you doubt whether it is an intuitive decision or an impulsive decision, you can be sure that it *is* an impulsive decision. Intuition does not leave any doubt.

If your decision within a group is based upon intuition, you will also have tremendous power to convince and lead the whole group. You will not only have the decision, you will have the power to execute the decision as well. You will have both in your life.

Q: All enlightened masters I have heard about left home for at least a number of years to experience enlightenment. Is this necessary? If not, why did they do it?

They did it to understand that it is unnecessary. What to do? Unless you do it, you don't understand that it is not necessary. People ask me, 'Swamiji, you did so much penance and became enlightened. Should we also do penance?'

Please understand, I tell you the honest truth. I did so much penance because I did not know.

For you there is no need.

Understand this simple analogy. There is one lock and ten thousand keys. I did not know which key would open the lock, so I worked with all ten thousand keys. One by one, I experimented. Suddenly one key opened the lock. Opening the lock did not take time. Experimenting with ten thousand keys took me ten years. Understand that opening took me one second, but experimenting with ten thousand keys took ten years of penance.

Why should you experiment with the ten thousand keys? Here I am giving you the right set of keys. You can straightaway open the lock and experience! There is no need to waste your whole life with ten thousand keys. I had to do it because I did not have the right person to tell me, 'This is the key. Take it and open the lock.'

For that reason, I had to play with all ten thousand keys until the lock opened. For you there is no need. Why waste your life playing with ten thousand keys? You neither have the time nor the energy. Here I am, straightaway giving you the key.

I have given you the best keys. Straightaway use them. Open the lock. You will open it in a second. Open the door and enjoy the fresh air that is in your consciousness.

In these discourses, I have given you at least ten or twelve keys. Take up any key and work with it. You will open the door and experience the ultimate Truth!

Q: When everything is divine in this universe, how can there be good and bad, happiness and sadness, lower level and upper level, jīvātma (individual self) and paramātmā (supreme Self), permanent and impermanent, etc. Is it not true only in the eyes of the perceiver?

True. Only in the eyes of the perceiver is there good and bad. In reality, there is no good and bad. Reality is beyond the duality of good and bad. Be very clear, when you achieve that state, there is no good and bad. There is something called good and bad only on the normal, material level.

Q: Respected Paramahansa Sri Nithyananda, my love and pranāms to you, Kindly answer these questions now or at such time as you feel appropriate. If God is at such a high vibration, as to be unaware of deaths caused by catastrophes, just as a SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) is unaware of the ants it crushes, then does it not follow that God does not hear our cries for help, when we are swept up in these catastrophes? And if that is the case, do our prayers reach God?

(Background: This question arises from an earlier question when a person asked why so many die in natural disasters. Nithyananda replied: Nature is unaware that people are dying in a tsunami or earthquake. It is like you driving a SUV over an anthill. Thousands of ants die. Do you notice? Your frequency is different from the ants. In the same way, Nature's frequency is different from ours.)

Nice question. Understand, when I said there is a difference in the frequencies of ants, man and God, I didn't mean that your prayers don't reach God. The reactions will not be as you expect, that's all.

It is unlike the Vithalacharya Telugu movies where a brilliant laser-like light comes out of the hands of Vishnu or Krishna. Whoosh! It falls on an eighty-year-old woman and she suddenly becomes eighteen and exclaims, 'Ah, what happened to me? I have become a new person!'

Please do not expect that. When I say that God's frequency is different, do not compare it to those kinds of movies where you suddenly open your eyes and see everything as new. No!

Understand that when you have faith, Existence responds using the form of the Guru, the form of the master.

If ten thousand people are having my *darśan* at a time, in their own places around the world, they see me as a vision. I can become aware of these *darśans* if I want to download that information. But as of now, I am using the mind for this work of talking to you, not to perceive anything else.

For example, here is a watch and a file on this table. If I look I can see the watch. But I am not looking at the watch right now so I do not know the time. However, at any moment if I want, I can see the time.

There are various statues around you in this hall. Because I am seeing you now, I do not see the statues. It is not that I can't see them. In a single moment, I can see them. In the same way, it is not that I can't know about who is receiving my *darśan*. This moment, if I close my eyes I can know; however, right now I am using my mind only to see you, that's all.

One more thing, why did I say it is not in the master's control? Actually your sincerity plays a role. When you are insincere, even God cannot help you. For example, if you need to be rescued from drowning, at least you must stretch out your hand. Otherwise, you will pull in the person rescuing you also.

Here, understand that your perceived answers are not merely the product of your ideas. No! Your perceived answers are from the master, from the Divine.

Because of your trust, you get the vision, the *darśan*. Otherwise, people will ask for *darśan* and it will become like a profession. You must have tremendous surrender to experience *darśan*, to have visions.

Masters can know about the *darśan* the moment they want to know. It is not that they are unaware of it. So please be very clear, it is a whole, complete and conscious process. But generally, at least with me, I don't interfere in the work of Existence. If it happens, it happens, that's all.

People tell me, 'Swamiji, I saw you in a dream. You healed and helped me.'

I tell them, 'Not me, it was Existence. It was your faith in the Divine. Existence used my form to help you.'

As long as I understand these words 'I am not', Existence will use my form to help you. The moment I think 'I am' this form will be thrown in the trashcan.

As long as you are out, God stays in your house. The moment you enter, God leaves. If we don't live in our body, the Divine will live in it, using our form.

I can say only one thing. Because I vacated this house, Existence is using this house to bless you, that's all.

I have vacated, I have given this house to Existence without collecting rent! I have asked Existence to stay without collecting rent. So the Divine is using this form.

People tell me, 'I have become alright. I had your *darśan*. You gave me the answer. It is all your grace.'

I tell them, 'No, your deep sincere trust and faith towards the master, God or *guru* has guided you.'

The other day someone came to me, a person deeply dedicated to Paramahansa Yogananda, a great master who lived in Los Angeles. This person has been doing Kriya Yoga for many years. Suddenly one day he was sitting and weeping and praying to Yogananda, 'Please show me a living master.'

He told me, 'Yogananda gave me *darśan* and gave me your website id, Swamiji: www.dhyanapeetam.org. He asked me to go and see the website!'

That's a strange thing! He said, 'I went to your website and saw you. I immediately felt connected and came to meet you.' He told me, 'It is only through your grace that it happened.'

I said, 'No, It was your faith towards Paramahansa Yogananda.'

Your master shows you the living master. Sometimes masters who have left the body guide you to the living master.

There are so many such related incidents. One person was praying to Yogananda, at his *Jīva samādhi* (enlightened master's final resting place), asking him to show a living master. Suddenly for no reason, I went there with a group of people. He saw me and came to me. When I put my hand on his head and blessed him, he suddenly entered into ecstasy and tears started pouring. He was in the same mood for several hours.

He told me, 'Twelve years ago I meditated with Paramahansa Yogananda's technique the first time. That same experience repeated today.'

Masters who have left their body always guide disciples to living masters.

I tell people, never think you need to spread my name. So many people, my marketing agents, are already there! Paramahansa Yogananda, Ramakrishna, Mahavatar Babaji and the likes are driving the mission. Nothing else needs to be done.

Q: If Ātman or Self is created or is svayambhu (self-created), why was the body required for its movement?

Ātman is *svayambhu*. Body is not required for *Ātman*. Please be clear, the body requires *Ātman*. *Ātman* does not require the body. Someone tells Ramana Maharshi, 'Bhagavan, six rupees per month is enough to live in Arunachala. (In those days, six rupees was a big amount). Six rupees is enough per month and I can do *ātma-sādhana* (self-enquiry).'

Bhagavan says, 'Fool, in order to live, even body and mind are unnecessary.' Only body needs *Ātman*. *Ātman* does not need the body.

Q: If Ātman is not creating karma, and body is creating karma, then Ātman is only the carrier of karma. Is this true?

Ātman is not even a carrier of karma. The seven subtle bodies that we discussed yesterday are carrying the karma. Ātman doesn't carry karma.

Q: Like Arjuna, I have my own battle to fight, but instead of it being the Mahabharata, it is the 'Law School Court Competition'. I know what must be done, but I lack the focus and energy to accomplish that. Do I lack sincerity? How do I build it?

Nice question. Just don't bother. Relax and do it. The Divine will take care. This question is answered for the questioner and not the question.

Q: Ātman is indestructible, so it is everlasting. From where did it originate? If Īśvara/Ātman/God is regulating, is it the same Īśvara who made Ātman?

Please understand, Ātman, Īśvara, Paramātmā are different trademarks, that's all. Just like the same pizza is sold in different shops, they are different trademarks. It is the same experience but different words are used such as Ātman, God or Paramātmā.

Eat one pizza; that's enough! One divine experience is enough. Nothing else is necessary.

Q: Dear Swamiji, I have attended your discourses since Sunday. When I am in your presence I feel blissful. I feel lost in your presence. I feel like I have fallen in love with you, in a pure way. I then go home, and dream of you. It is sometimes hard to distinguish if I am at your discourse or dreaming.

The problem is that my sensitivity has heightened so much that my emotions are like a seesaw, going up and down constantly. For example, I lose my temper with crazy drivers. I find it hard to have compassion for selfish people. I feel

lonely and am unable to fit in with anyone. I find it difficult to have a conversation with people as I did before. These days I feel like being alone and quiet. Does this mean I have too many engrams in my seven bodies?

Also I feel sad that your discourse will be over soon, but my heart feels full of life. How can I deal with these negativities?

Please understand that in the initial level there will be a little struggle. However, when you grow in sensitivity, you will feel compassionate towards everybody. When you also feel compassionate towards selfish people, your compassion is fulfilled.

Accept people as they are, even if they don't accept you as you are. That happens when you grow in maturity.

Of course this is one phase. This is a good phase, nothing wrong. You are growing, but this is not the end. Go deep and you will experience.

*Q: You said earlier that **smṛti** is alterable and it changes with time. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna talks about the caste system and who can be a **brāhmaṇa** etc. But in India we have so many problems with the caste system. So, if **smṛti** is properly interpreted, it should not give rise to any problems. Am I correct?*

This is an important question. Let us analyze this.

First, our *smṛti*, especially the Bhagavad Gita, state that caste is based upon a person's mental setup and not upon one's birth. It is based on the *karma*, unfulfilled actions of the person that pull him to fulfill them.

The system is based on the mental setup of the person, not on the birth.

So why should the caste system be created, even based on mental setup? Human beings cannot live without a community system. People must feel they belong to a group. We cannot straightaway tell people to feel connected to the whole universe. That happens only after enlightenment. Until that time, they need to feel that they belong to a particular community.

For that reason, the masters decided, 'Let us create a community system base whereby people will grow.' In India, the community system is based upon wisdom and intelligence. Importance is given to intelligence.

The person who works for the sake of the wellbeing of others, who does his work as a service, is a *brāhmaṇa*. A *brāhmaṇa* shares knowledge or wisdom. The person who works out of fear in order to protect himself or people whom he considers his own is a *kṣatriya*. The person who works out of greed, to acquire more wealth, is a *vaiśya*. The person who works to serve the other groups in order to satisfy his hunger and thirst, also working primarily for himself, is a *sūdra*.

This is the way masters created the community system - based upon intelligence and not birth. In the course of time, just like all truths, this truth was somehow lost.

One more thing: for any great experiments, any great innovation, if the next generation does not continue good research and development (R&D), the researches end in failure. Somehow our R&D department was not strong enough. It has failed.

That is the reason we started associating ourselves with birth instead of mental setups. But at least the Indian community was created based upon intelligence. Other countries' created communities based upon money. One small example: get into a commercial aircraft and walk through the first-class seats to go to the economy class. Tell me, how do the first-class passengers look at you? It is the same way as the fanatic higher-class person looks at a lower-class person!

In every country, the community or caste system exists. Never say that the caste system exists only in India. India bases the societal division upon intelligence. Other countries base it on money and power.

In India, the whole importance goes to intelligence. If we want to be considered a higher person, we must study. If we want the highest social respect, we must renounce and become intelligent. That's why in Tamil they say, *turavikku vaenthanum turumbu*. 'Even a king will come and touch a *sanyāsi*'s (sage) feet, even though the *sanyāsi* has nothing to give.' He has one thing: intelligence and wisdom that he shares with the world.

In India, even if the community system has degraded, the original system was created based on intelligence, not on money or power. Respect is given to the person carrying the wisdom, the wealth of knowledge, and not outer worldly wealth.

One more thing: Just because it is degraded today because of a few people, we cannot condemn the original caste system. Just because some mistake happened at some point in time, we cannot condemn the whole system. The system has helped us in many ways.

Let us clear the system of its corruption with respect and gratitude. Why should we continuously condemn and weaken ourselves? If someone has a tumor in his hand, let us do a surgery and take out the tumor. Why should we kill that person instead? Similarly, we acquired the tumor, that is misunderstanding. Let us analyze and clear it. There is no need to condemn the whole system instead.

We need to look into these things with a little more love and compassion.

Please understand: Because one community associated themselves with the scriptures, the scriptures are still alive. They were preserved because one community took the responsibility. They gave up outer comforts. They gave up everything in the outer world. They dedicated their time, energy and effort to recite and preserve the scriptures. Indian scriptures are the oldest scriptures. They are preserved in an authentic way - without any system, no other way to record, no other way to transmit, no other way to preserve - just by repeating and memorizing. Hundreds of thousands of verses and millions of aphorisms are preserved because of the dedication of one community. So our system is not *entirely* wrong; just a few small corruptions have entered, that's all.

All we need is some surgery for these tumors, for these corruptions. We need not kill the system. When we have the attitude of killing, we not only kill the system, we also kill ourselves.

Even though we might not understand the system, we might not believe it, we might not accept it, we still belong to that system. So, go for surgery, not for murder. That is the right attitude.

Q: There are great ideals in spirituality. What bothers me is that I find a divergence between the ideals and daily life. There is not only caste discrimination, but there are also a variety of other discriminations such as the discrimination against poor people. When a maid comes to work in the house, and she is ten years old and is missing school, my heart aches. That will not happen in the West. I'm not defending the West, but we must be cautious when we make statements about the West. Yes, ours is a great religion. I have great love for it, but have we updated it? Have we moved with time? Whose responsibility is it to make sure we continuously update religion? I also find a great love for materialism, which is against the laws of Hinduism. It is not enough if just great men like you practice

the religious ideals, it should be possible for the common man to practice it. How can we say that we have spiritual freedom in the East and not in the West? We need to look at what we mean by spiritual freedom.

First, regarding the statements that you made: are they your conclusions or questions? If they are your questions, I am here to answer. If they are your conclusions, I have no right to answer.

Second: you made a statement about the poor girl working and missing school. Please understand, just because of our religion, our population avoids so much misery and suffering.

Look into the history of the other parts of the world. Their population is ten times less, yet there is more violence. Our people are silent, beautiful, accepting poverty, accepting disease and accepting everything, because of our spiritual background.

One more thing: you said that I must be careful when I make comments. In the beginning I said clearly, when I want to show the uniqueness or extraordinary nature of a culture, I must compare a few things. Please don't feel hurt.

I have to say a few things when I represent the truth. I am not here to condemn anything. I am here to show the truth as it is, to explain the facts as they are. I am clear and I reinforce the letter and spirit of the statements that I make.

The next thing: India handles many problems because the common mass of India follows spiritual principles. Please don't expect the mass of India to become enlightened. I tell you one thing: Talk to any farmer in any Indian village. You will find that he knows more about spirituality and religion than any professor of philosophy from another country. Because they practice religion, our people do not rebel. They are nonviolent, even after experiencing suppression, poverty and disease.

In contrast, look at life in some other countries. For instance, if somebody is homeless, do we go near him? We fear him. We don't even lower our car window. We know he can harm us. But in India if a beggar comes, do we feel disturbed? Do we feel threatened? No!

In some countries, I am advised: 'if a lower-class guy comes near the car, do not lower your window. He may be violent.' But in India a homeless person is nonviolent. Violence is not associated with poverty. Poverty is not a sin in the Indian constitution, in the Indian system. Poverty is either handled with compassion or it is neglected. In other systems, poverty is a sin. With poverty, we have no

right to exist in society. If we penetrate deeply and look into social systems, the gangsters and the homeless continuously rebel against rich people. They are continuously into terrorist activities. If we compare on a per-individual basis, we do not see this in India on the scale that we see in other countries. It may be less than one percent.

Rebelliousness against the rich is less in India because of spiritual ideas such as *karma*, accepting that life and the whole world is nothing, etc. These concepts are infused into our system more than any other society. Poverty in a way is respected in our country. The educated society respects poverty and a simple way of life.

In India when a beggar stands near us, we either give him money or ignore him. We don't disrespect him because he is poor. If we didn't give him money, we feel a little guilty. Either we do something or we carry guilt that we did not do what we were supposed to do. Even that guilt is the offshoot of spirituality.

And one more thing: In India, whether we want it or not, whether we believe it or not, these type of ideas are continuously put into our head. We are made to continuously listen to something about spirituality. When we take into account India's large population, we have surely done a great job. I applaud the job done by our people. What a variety of languages and cultures India handles!

I travel around the world continuously. Last year, I flew almost two hundred thousand miles. When I visit different countries, I don't find the large variety of languages, clothes and food that exists in India. The difference between Europe and America is less than the difference between Karnataka and Tamilnadu (neighboring states in India).

India exists as a country without any problems just because of the religious faith and structure.

Please be very clear that we are already doing a good job. Don't think we need to go from bad to good. We must go from good to better. We have condemned ourselves for so long. It is time to stand up! We are not in bad shape. We are in good shape. We just need to get into better shape!

One more consideration: At least the main problems of caste system do not exist in present-day India. Enough of culture and acceptance has spread around the country. We should not speak about India with data that we have collected about thirty years ago.

Today, practically every village has an educational and medical facility, as well as some understanding about life. India has improved, especially after the new way

of life and social service started spreading around the country, helped by the post-Vivekananda movements that serve the society.

I don't want to go into minute details. Please go into this deeply and see. We don't even hear of many types of crimes these days.

In India all the houses are open. Kids move around wherever they want. At least in my village, I used to enter into any house and eat. Hardly a few hundred houses and I could enter any home and eat because that is the way we lived.

Wherever child abuse and all these things occur in India, it is a lower percentage compared to the total volume of people. And the next thing, these kinds of crimes have increased only where television has entered.

In the past and in the present, we have done a great job. Of course we can do better, no doubt, but we don't need to feel worthless. Sometimes, our guilt that we have not achieved what we want is projected on society and we collect data that supports our guilt and project a picture. If we stand on the platform of truth and analyze, we will know the truth.

You say that some ten-year old girl is working, etc. You can collect data from wherever you want. I see many young girls working in houses in other countries. Of course, the age is a little higher, that's all!

And you talk about education. Even after education, what do they do? Why are there so many gangsters? Even the idea of a gangster doesn't exist in India. In India a crime is done for the sake of money or benefit. There are three kinds of crimes: crimes done for the benefit of the world, crimes done to have direct benefit by robbing the person and crimes done for no reason other than the sake of enjoyment.

This third-level of crime is practically non-existent in India. We hear about many gangsters and crimes done for the sake of enjoyment in other countries, such as shooting in the highways, etc. I have never heard of such crimes in India. People only shoot and kill for some benefit. But other countries have so much third-level crime because of deep depression and rebellious consciousness, 'Why should the other person have something while I don't?' In India, people don't say: 'Why should he have and why don't I have?' The third-level of crime is *tamasic* (indolence) and practically absent in India.

The media also plays a major role in creating misconceptions.

For nine years, I walked the length and breadth of India without touching money. Actually this experiment is called *parivrājaka* in Sanskrit. It is supposed to

be done as a vow by spiritual teachers to understand the common life of the country. You are given a rule that you should not touch money or preserve food for the next meal. For nine years, I lived like this. I am a healthy young person. Yet for nine years, I did not work for my food, clothes or shelter. I was just meditating and doing research on the inner world science. I was given food, clothes and shelter with respect.

Where else could this happen? Any other country would have asked me to work or put me in a homeless shelter with disrespect. I was given everything - not just in one village but in every village. I walked from Kanyakumari to Tapovan, from the southern end of India to the north, from Akshardham to Ganga Sagar, from the west to the east. The people of every village had love and respect for our truths, our wisdom and our spiritual practices. Above all, even if they were unable to practice it, they had tremendous respect for people who practiced it. That in itself is a great thing!

When we respect someone who practices, we imbibe truth in our own lives.

The respect for our hero makes us imbibe his qualities in our life. I have seen so much *bhakti* (devotion) in some villages, especially in Gujarat (a state in north-west India).

Once I traveled from Akshardham (a town in Gujarat) and I stayed in a village. An elderly lady invited me to her house. Her only property was a cow and a hut. From the cow's milk, she made curds and sold it to support herself. I stayed with her for ten days. She had a small Krishna idol. She lived with that Krishna. She talked to that Krishna. Everyday she sold her milk and offered the money at Krishna's feet and told Krishna her complaints: 'Today that fellow did not give me the money. He cheated me. Today I got more milk.' She just lived with Krishna!

After ten days, I told her that I was leaving to have the *darśan* (worship) of *Somnath* (Shiva Temple in Gujarat).

She asked, 'Why are you leaving? I will not ask you to work. I will always feed you. Please stay with me. You don't need to work.'

See the love!

I became emotional and said, 'Ma, it is because of people like you that India is alive.'

I know the backbone of India. Don't speak from the superficial skin and sweat of India. Speak to me from the backbone! The media portrays only the sweat smell, not the backbone. I have seen this in every village. Every village I either walked through or sometimes used a bullock cart (cart drawn by bulls), covering several thousand miles! I know the backbone. The media is sensational. They need sensations to show people. I can relate a thousand incidents to show otherwise.

You can quote one ten-year old working without going to school. I can quote millions of people who give education to others who cannot afford it. Only in India, charitable educational institutions give free education to many people. More than forty three percent of education is given to people by religious charitable institutions. In no other country is so much education given by charitable institutions!

One thing to note when it comes to percentage is the quantity. Another country's one hundred percent is India's five percent! See the quantity. I know how many thousands of people are given education free of cost in India. At least in the last fifty years, we have done a tremendous job, especially the post-Vivekananda movements. I am the very proof! So many houses are ready to give food. So many villages are ready to take care of spiritual truths just because of this saffron cloth that I am wearing.

And remember: I may have been a robber or a thief. There were many possibilities because I was new to that village. We have media and televisions in the villages also. The people are aware of criminals coming in disguises and committing crimes. But beyond all these things, the spirit and culture are alive. They still entertained me!

I was in the Himalayas one week ago. We saw thousands of *sanyāsīs* wandering like I did, not caring about the next meal. These people who are taken care of by society prove that we respect and follow the religious ideals. We have done a great job when we consider the size of the population.

When I return to my country after traveling all over the world, I feel gratitude to the culture and the country in which I was born and brought up.

Let me tell you: When premature babies are born, we need an incubator to keep the baby healthy. Like that, India is a spiritual incubator. Indian culture is a spiritual incubator. We may say there are one or two holes here and there but still it is a usable and working spiritual incubator.

Q: I have a comment to make from Vivekananda's words: 'If only we can combine the spiritual wisdom of the East and the material wealth of the West.'

Yes, I am all for progress. I am not for condemning!

Please be clear: We have not done anything wrong!

Please understand that only on the full moon can we see the black patches on the moon. We can't see the patches on a new moon. By its own light, the moon shows its black patches. By its own glory, India shows its problems.

Because we have the ideal of perfection, we understand and realize our problems. The moment we understand our problems, we prove that we are great. That is proof that we are intelligent.

Why do we say that we have a problem? Because we have the ideal of perfectionism! That shows we have achieved great things. The idea of perfectionism reaching a billion people is a great job!

Understand: even people in the lowest slum celebrate *Vinayaka Chaturti* and *Durga Pūjā* (festivals in honor of Hindu Gods). They may not know the spiritual ideal of *Vinayaka* (Ganesha, the Hindu deity), but they know there is some energy greater than us. That is why they have simple rules like bowing down to that energy. Reaching even the most deluded and the lowest rung within a population of a billion people is not a joke. Understand that that itself is a big job!

When I was traveling outside India, a Catholic priest from India came to meet me.

I asked him, 'Father, how are you?'

He said, '*Swamiji*, if any religion wants to flourish, they must come to India. If they want workers, they must come to India. Whether it is Christianity or Hinduism, we can only get them from India! In India, spiritual life is in our blood.'

Whether it is Krishna, Shiva or Christ, living the spiritual life is a basic thing. It is in the blood of the population all across the country! That alone shows we have done a big job.

One more point: In India, ninety-three percent of Christians go to church. Even other religious systems are stronger in India because the root, the understanding of

following a higher, spiritual life is in our blood. Indian Christians are more dedicated to their beliefs. Whatever our people believe in spiritually, they are dedicated to that. If we penetrate and see the root, we see that our ancient masters did a tremendous job.

Compared to the volume of people that we are handling, whatever service we do is like mixing *asafoetida* (an Indian spice) in the ocean!

Somebody asked me, ‘Swamiji, do you think you can change the country by your service? Whatever you do is like mixing *asafoetida* in the ocean. The smell of the ocean will not change. How can you help the whole world?’

I told him, ‘I don’t know if I can change the whole ocean, but my hand smells beautiful. I am enjoying that. Nothing else can be done.

Q: Respected Swamiji, I am one of the sheep-lion who has forgotten his lion self. Now I want to roar. How?

Just roar, that’s all. There can be no *how*. The moment you ask *how*, you forget you are a lion. Just roar. Nothing else needs to be done.

Let us all experience the sincerity and imbibe and experience the truths of *Parabrahma* Krishna (cosmic Krishna). Let us pray to Him to give us all the sincerity and experience of the truth that He is teaching through the Gita, to all of us, and let Him make us experience and establish ourselves in eternal bliss, *nityānanda*!

*Thus ends the seventeenth chapter named **Sraddhātraya Vibhāga Yogaḥ** of the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of Yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.*

BhagavadGita

Drop Everything And Surrender

CHAPTER 18

There is nothing to surrender except the 'I' and 'mine'.
Krishna explains how surrender brings the ultimate
freedom - Enlightenment.



- ◆ I believe I am a spiritual person. I have met spiritual masters from whom I have benefited. I seem to be guided by unseen energies. But I am not content to be where I am. I conceive the future and work hard to make that reality. Am I on the right path?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you said that renouncing one's ego is the ultimate step in renunciation and that compassion is the outcome. Please explain how this occurs.
- ◆ *Swamiji*, you said that rituals connect us with the cosmic energy. Please explain how.
- ◆ Surrender of ego is true renunciation. But to surrender you need ego, or something like the mind. Isn't this a conflict?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, your disciples say that you burn them. This makes us afraid. What does it mean?
- ◆ I am a Nithya Spiritual Healer and I meditate regularly. Along with detachment, I find that I become disinclined to do anything. Then I become afraid that I am falling into laziness. What is happening?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, education teaches us that we must think through problems to reach a solution. Yet, you say to stop thinking. What then is the point of education?
- ◆ Krishna says surrender is the route to enlightenment, to reach Him. But doesn't surrender and renunciation mean surrender of the desire to be enlightened as well?

- ◆ *Swamiji*, Krishna says to drop attachments and that is the only way. How is this possible?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, Krishna says that 'having known Me in essence, one merges in Me' and refers to this as devotion. How can knowledge (*jñāna*) be devotion (*bhakti*)?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, is the state of surrender that Krishna talks about in Gita the same as your concept of 'unclutching'?
- ◆ How can we surrender the ego, when this desire to surrender is itself an expression of the ego?
- ◆ *Swamiji*, I have not understood how surrender and renunciation can be used as a technique. Please explain.
- ◆ Why are we afraid to face life?



Drop Everything And Surrender

Drop everything and surrender. This is the gist not only of this final chapter of Bhagavad Gita, but it is also the essence of the entire Bhagavad Gita. In addition, throughout the ages it has been the basis of the teachings of all the spiritual masters.

Krishna concludes the Bhagavad Gita with one subject: Drop everything and surrender. Beautifully He says:

*sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
aham tvā sarvāpāṇebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā sucaḥ*

Drop everything, whatever you know as *dharma*, whatever you know as life, whatever you think you know, just drop it. Drop everything and surrender. Whatever you know is only your knowledge, it is just what *you* know. It is not what *is*.

In fact, wisdom and truth are about what we do not know. That is all! What we know cannot lead us to the ultimate Truth. Knowledge of the mind, that we take so much pride in, functions like blinkers that we wear to shut out the truth of Existence. The French philosopher Rene Descartes said, 'I think, therefore I am.' There may be no doubt that he was a human or that he existed because of his mind and thoughts. However, the mind is not the scale of measure of existence.

What we are has nothing to do with our thoughts. What we are is beyond our thoughts. If our thoughts alone could circumscribe what we are, we would be nothing more than a biomechanical machine.

Animals have greater innate intelligence than humans. Animals do not clutter their minds with fantasies like humans do. They simply flow with nature.

A lion or tiger hunts for food when it is hungry. It eats when it must eat and sleeps when it is tired. No wild animal stores food, except in rare cases when dictated by Nature. No animal in the wild becomes obese.

Humans think. That is the problem. Our great sages, the ancient *ṛṣis*, declared the opposite of Descartes. They say, 'Drop your mind and you will be aware. You will realize your true potential as a human.'

Adi Shankaracharya, one of the greatest Hindu philosophers, proclaims this so beautifully in the verses of his Atma Shatakam. To define what he truly is, Shankara negates his body, mind, senses, emotions and all his relationships. By negating all this, he declares his inner divinity boldly and beautifully.

Understand, we are spiritual beings in human form, and not human beings striving to be spiritual. Our potential is huge. Our intelligence is unlimited. But our intellect *is* limited.

Knowledge is of three kinds. The first and the least relevant type is acquired through the mind and intellect. Scientific knowledge such as physics, math, medicine, etc., falls into this category. We think we benefit from this knowledge. We believe this knowledge enhances the quality of our lives. In the end, we wonder why we are unhappy despite all this knowledge. The more we acquire knowledge belonging to this first category, the more disturbed we become.

The second type of knowledge cannot be taught in the same way as intellectual knowledge. This type of knowledge must be learnt. Creative arts belong to this type. We cannot learn to sing, dance or write by reading a book. It does not involve mere absorption of information. We must observe. We must internalize. We must imbibe and then we must express. In addition to the head and intellect, one's heart and emotions must be involved. Knowledge based on the heart is based upon intellect plus something more.

The third and highest type of knowledge is from the being. It is conveyed from the being to the being. This knowledge is the 'aha' experience that happens so rarely. The greatest discoveries and inventions are this type of knowledge. This knowledge is intuition. This is communion, as opposed to communication at the intellectual level and collaboration at the emotional level. Knowledge at the being level is a combination of knowledge of the head, knowledge of the heart plus something more.

Knowledge about God can also be of all these three types. When we started the Bhagavad Gita series, we learned what *śāstras*, *stotras* and *sūtras* were. *Śāstra* is

knowledge of the intellect. It is acquired by reading and understanding. *Stotra* is knowledge acquired through learning, through the heart, that is through devotion. *Sūtra* is learning through the being, that is through meditative techniques that cut to the core of what is essential.

Even knowledge about God creates bondage when it is merely intellectual because we will only know about God. That is all! We will not know God. Please understand this. Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God. Knowing about God is different from knowing God. When we completely surrender everything, we will not even have the idea that we know God. When that idea does not exist in us, we know God. Otherwise we may know about God but we do not know exactly what the Divine is.

Words do not express God. No expressions can lead to the experience of God. God is when expressions cease. Zen masters say that the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon. It is only a pointer, a reminder. Words about God in any form, however sincere they may be, are mere pointers and reminders.

The problem with religions is that they teach us about God. They do not teach us how to know God. All moral science and related classes do not help us reach God. Religions tell us a few things about God and instill fear and greed in us.

How many religions have helped enlighten people? On the contrary, we find that all the wars in the history of mankind have been fought in the name of religion. Millions of people have been massacred in the name of preserving and propagating religions. All colonization happened with religion putting out signposts. Religions caused destruction and death, not enlightenment.

Spiritual masters never preached that one should kill another or cajole, coerce and convert. No spiritual master preached violence. If he did, he would be no master!

Great spiritual masters come with the mission to raise us to a superconscious state. They aim to awaken individual consciousness so that we become aware that we are part of the collective consciousness of this universe. They come with a mission to make us understand that we must move from the attitude of 'I' to 'you' and 'us.'

The ignorant followers of the great masters fostered violence based upon their limited understanding of the truths that the masters expressed. Instead of spreading spirituality that integrates beings, they built religious institutions that divide people. Unlike spirituality that spreads love among people, religion fosters violence.

Understand: Enlightenment is a gift. It makes no difference what effort we put in. Whatever we may have put in does not matter. We may have stood on one leg for hundreds of years. We may have fasted for thousands of years. We may have practiced meditation or yoga or some other technique. These are equivalent to buying the one-dollar lottery ticket. Anything we put in is comparable to that one-dollar lottery ticket. What we receive in return is a pure gift. Whatever we do is within the dream. How can that get us something beyond the dream?

Krishna says, 'Drop everything and surrender.' First let us understand the word 'surrender'. The word itself frightens people. We must understand that we are not going to lose anything when we surrender. We are only going to gain everything. However, for lack of a better word, we must use this word.

Realize first of all that we have nothing of any value to surrender! We only think we have something to surrender. The truth is that we have nothing to surrender. We simply need to open our eyes and see that everything that *is*, is divine. It is Existence. Whatever we think is ours does not exist! The 'I' and 'mine' that we hold onto are mere lies. The moment we understand this, we surrender. The moment we surrender, we understand.

When we call something 'mine', legally it may belong to us, but existentially, it does not. Legally we can fence off a piece of land and call it ours. Legally we can own things. But Nature or Existence does not know that it is ours. When a cyclone hits, it does not care whose property it is. It does not know the law! It does not know that legally a cyclone is not allowed on someone's property! For Existence there is no law.

Your idea of 'mine' is protected by the laws of society. You cannot truly use the term 'law of the land'. The land has no laws. Only society has laws. The land can have an earthquake at any time. We cannot have laws to govern Nature. The law of the land is beyond your comprehension. As long as you are caught with the concept of 'I' and 'mine', you will not understand the truth about Existence. You are caught in thinking that something is 'you' and something is 'yours'.

When Krishna tells us to drop everything and surrender, He asks us to open our eyes and see the foolishness of our possessions and expectations. Open your eyes and see the drama that you are playing. Open your eyes and see the game that you are playing. It is one thing if you play the game to cheat others; however, do not cheat yourself. By and by we forget this and cheat ourselves with this game.

Please understand, there is no 'I', there is no 'mine'. The person who is intelligent and willing to open his eyes and see reality, will sooner or later wake up to the truth that there is no 'I' or 'mine'.

Can whatever you think of as 'I,' either your body or mind, function without air? Can you say that the air belongs to you? This basic energy, *prāṇa*, which goes in and comes out, does not belong to you. If *prāṇa* stops happening, what you think of as 'you' disappears.

It is like saying that the foundation does not belong to me, but the first floor of the house is mine! You can do that legally. But it is impossible existentially. In the same way, the building may belong to you, but the earth that it sits on does not belong to you. The earth can give one small shake, and whatever you thought was yours just disappears!

The very foundation of whatever you think is 'you' does not belong to you. It belongs to the Whole. It belongs to Existence. It belongs to the universe. It belongs to Nature with whom you are continuously fighting. The base or root of what you think of as 'you' does not belong to you.

We take for granted the air that continuously goes in and comes out. We believe that the air belongs to us. There is no break in this natural supply. Maybe if God called a strike, like a workers' union strike, we would understand that we cannot take even the air for granted. Suppose He called a strike for a minute, then we would understand that it did not belong to us. But He is a *Karuṇāmūrti*, god of mercy. Out of His compassion, He never goes on strike! That is why we take life for granted. Just because certain things belong to us legally, we think that the concept 'mine' is solid. The truth is that both the 'I' and 'mine' have no base.

Anybody who is intelligent enough to open his eyes and see, realizes that 'I' and 'mine' are a drama. Whatever you may think is 'I', is not under your control. The moment the air that goes in does not come out, it is over. 'I' disappears. Immediately your name will be taken from the nameboard outside your house and put on your tombstone. You will be called a dead body! You will be taken to the place where you can rest forever! Your house and car will be useless. So, whatever we think is 'I' and 'mine' is baseless.

Sometimes even the piece of land that we think belongs to us we may find doesn't, when we see the papers of that land! Our life itself is built on paper. The moment we have the intelligence to see this, the moment we wake up to this reality, we achieve the state of surrender. The moment we understand that in Existence

nothing called 'I' or 'mine' exists, we immediately experience tremendous relief from the need to continuously protect ourselves.

These two instincts of holding onto 'I' and 'mine' are the reason for physical and mental problems. The instinct to survive and the instinct to possess are the root cause of our problems. On the other hand, when we realize that the 'I' and 'mine' do not exist, we laugh at ourselves. We realize how we have cheated ourselves and how foolish we have been in spending our whole life and energy in building sandcastles.

A small Zen story:

Some children were playing on the beach, making sandcastles. The whole day they worked hard to build beautiful sandcastles. At the end of the day, they jumped on the castles and destroyed everything that they had taken the whole day to make. And they enjoyed that too! A Zen master sat nearby and watched the whole scene. He merely said: 'This is life.'

A king also watched this scene. Then one child started crying because another child smashed his sandcastle. The king laughed and said, 'How foolish to cry over a sandcastle.'

The Zen master laughed at the king. The king became angry and asked, 'Why are you laughing?'

The master explained, 'At least these kids know that they are playing when they make and break sandcastles. In contrast, when you make and break stonecastles, you think you are doing something real. The children are more aware than you; yet you call them foolish. That is why I am laughing.'

The important point here is that the children knew that both the building and the demolishing was a drama. That is the reason they laughed. They enjoyed building and destroying. In our so-called real life, we do not understand this truth.

Actually, our life is pseudo-life. The way children live is real life. They understand that it has no value intrinsically. One day it will be built and the next day destroyed. They do not sit and cry. They are not emotionally disturbed. They have no problems. But if our castles are shaken, we have a problem. We do not even have the basic understanding that all castles will be shaken and all palaces will be destroyed.

The whole thing is pure fun! We must understand that whatever way we live and whatever we may build, does not belong to us. If we do not internalize the

outer incidents and if we treat them with the indifference they deserve, we experience what I call surrender.

There is only one thing to remember: Do not internalize sensory inputs and do not take things too seriously. When you take life too seriously, you can be sure of one thing, and that is sickness. All seriousness is a form of sickness. When you think the 'I' or 'mine' is the truth, you create trouble for yourself. The moment you believe that there is an 'I' in your being, you start moving away from life.

The idea that you have of yourself has no base, whatever you may think of as you. Sometimes you think you are the body. Sometimes you think you are the mind. And other times, you think you are the senses. No matter what you identify yourself with, it is baseless.

There is another critical aspect to understand in this regard. Whatever aspect you think of as 'you' will not grow. If you think you are the body, you stop the growth of the body because you do not like change. When you think you are the mind, you stop the growth of the mind. You stop the inputs to the mind.

That is the reason egoistic people cannot listen to new ideas or read about them. They cannot learn because learning is against their vested interests. They think that they already know and have nothing more to learn. When you think that your mind is you, the very attitude of learning, the beginner's mind, is lost. Wherever you cling, you destroy that.

If you think you are the body, you do not let the body rejuvenate itself. You do not let your body do its regular work. If you think you are the mind, you do not let it learn anything new. You do not allow anything new to enter. That is a sure way of destroying it.

The same applies to what you consider as 'mine'. This is based on the laws of society. In no way is it related to the laws of Existence.

It is well known to science that of the trillions of cells in our body-mind system, millions of cells die each day and millions of cells are reborn. After a few years, there isn't a single cell in our body which existed two years earlier. Every single entity in the body is new. This means that there is really no constant 'I' as we imagine. Yet, we carry that label proudly.

All we are is a bunch of memories, value systems and beliefs, collectively known as *saṁskāras*. Our *saṁskāras* define us. Our *saṁskāras* rule us. And our *saṁskāras* make decisions for us. That is what this 'I' is all about.

We conduct Life Bliss Programs on meditation to eliminate these *saṃskāras* because *saṃskāras* rule us and we make our decisions unconsciously. We live unconsciously and instinctively, instead of consciously and intelligently. When we are focused on the 'I', our responses are unconscious and instinctive. They are defensive and protective. Studies have shown that when cells are in a protective mode they cannot grow. As long as we are focused on 'I', we never grow.

The feeling of 'I' arises from the *svādiṣṭhāna cakra*, the spleen energy center, where the Self is established. This is the seat of insecurity. Until we relinquish our fears by energizing this *cakra*, we desperately grasp the apparent security of 'I'.

The feeling of 'mine' is more primal than that of 'I', 'mine', the ideas of survival and possession, precedes the identity of 'I'. It arises from the *mūlādhāra cakra*, the root energy center. All emotional blocks like lust, greed and anger arise through this feeling of possession.

Giving up possessiveness and identity are difficult when we are conditioned the way we are, yet it is not impossible. In the Nithyananda Order, all the teachers who take up mission work conduct the Life Bliss Programs, change their names to spiritual names that I give them.

Why do they change their names, sometimes even at the age of sixty? They will tell you that for the first time in their lives they feel a sense of liberation and freedom. They feel reborn and they celebrate. Initially people told me that it would be difficult to find teachers who are willing to change their names, since most people would not like to give up their past identity. The truth is that when you truly understand what 'you' is, you sincerely wish to give up your past identity.

Similarly, when we give up our possessions and attachment to possessions, we feel liberation. When I walked out of my home for spiritual wandering, I felt no loss. Today, the whole world is my home!

This does not mean that all of you need to become monks, renunciates and *sanyāsīs*. You can happily continue your normal life, but drop your attachments, fantasies, speculations, greed and fear.

You need not renounce what you already have. All you need to do to achieve happiness is to renounce what you *do not* have.

This one statement has been a clarion call for awakening thousands of people. For the first time in their lives, they understood the mistakes they were making. By dropping fantasies about the future which had no existence and by dropping regrets

and guilt about their past about which nothing could be done, they reached a state of happiness that had thus far eluded them.

Renunciation does not mean sitting cross-legged with a tense look and eyes closed. If enlightenment could happen by shutting off our senses, it would be easy. We would just need to sit in soundproof rooms, wear blindfolds and have no contact with anyone. We would emerge enlightened after one week or so. If this method worked, all prisoners in solitary confinement should become enlightened.

Renunciation is a state of mind and not a mere state of the body. It is even more than a state of mind. It is a state of being. We can renounce attachments to relationships and possessions while being involved in material life. On the other hand, we could take *sanyās*, go to the distant Himalayas, and every time we close our eyes, our inner television would switch on.

The surrender that Krishna talks about involves dropping fantasies and surrendering to reality. The true reality, the only truth, is that we are part of the universal energy. We are part of the collective consciousness. When we have this awareness, there is no room for the individual 'I' and 'mine' to rule our actions.

Throughout Bhagavad Gita, Krishna talks about renunciation. Ramakrishna Paramahansa said that the Gita is nothing but *Ta Gi*, meaning *tyāg*, or renunciation. Ramakrishna said, 'Keep repeating *Ta Gi* and you will understand *Gi Ta*.'

Again and again Krishna speaks about renunciation: How we should surrender the fruits of action to Him, without renouncing the action itself, and how all knowledge and action should be surrendered at His feet. He prepares Arjuna for this final moment when He tells him that all that needs to be done is to surrender. That is all.

Surrender is of three kinds. The first step is the surrender of the intellect. For most people, especially intellectuals, this is the easiest. Your ego must be ripe before it can fall. The more stuff you pack into your thick skull, the more bloated it becomes. You become intoxicated with your own knowledge. You become intellectually arrogant. You are then ripe for surrender.

When someone appears on the scene and proves that intellectual knowledge is a pile of garbage, a person with a truly ripe intellectual ego understands and accepts the truth. Only those with half-baked knowledge who pretend to have intellectual status have a problem in understanding such a truth. A true intellectual can understand that all acquired knowledge is a mirage, an illusion.

When this happens, such a person surrenders his intellect to the master who shows him the way. Many intellectual seekers and spiritual shoppers come to me with loads of questions. After spending time with me, most of them tell me with great surprise that they no longer have questions. I don't take the trouble to answer their questions. No one can answer such questions. All I do is add more words to them. They struggle with the new words and ultimately find the right answers themselves! Once a few questions are answered, the rest just drop.

When I do answer, I answer the questioner. I address the person, not his question. I look into his being and provide the solution.

The next step in surrender is the surrender of the heart. People ask how they will remember me when they go away from the ashram. I tell them that if I am their master, they will have trouble forgetting me! Remembering me is not an issue, forgetting me is.

The thought of the master will melt your heart. You will become emotional. You do not need to be in the master's physical presence. You do not need to see His picture. You do not need to hear His voice. The mere thought is enough. Tears will flow from your eyes. This is a powerful form of surrender. Ramakrishna says, 'Know this for sure: When the mere thought of your *iṣṭadevatā* (favorite deity) or your master reduces you to tears, you are in your final *janma*, your final birth.'

What an enlightened master says is always true. So powerful is this surrender that it can liberate you, enlighten you. This is the power of devotion, *bhakti*. Krishna keeps repeating that this is the easiest way to reach Him. Do not worry about learning scriptures. Do not worry about performing rituals. Do not worry about techniques. He says, 'Just be devoted to Me and Me alone, and I shall save you.'

The third and final form of surrender is the surrender of the senses. When the surrender of senses happens, enlightenment happens, and when enlightenment happens, the surrender of the senses happens.

Walking with Arjuna after the Mahabharata war, Krishna points to a bird on a tree and remarks, 'Arjuna, look at that green crow!'

Arjuna responds, 'Yes, Krishna, I see the green crow.'

Krishna says, 'What a fool you are! How can a crow be green?'

Arjuna simply says, 'Krishna, when you told me to look at that green crow, what I saw was indeed a green crow.'

Such was the state of Arjuna's surrender to his master, whatever He said was what Arjuna's eyes saw. This is the final state of surrender.

It may surprise you that an enlightened master has no freedom to do what he wishes. His surrender to the cosmic energy is so total that every move he makes is dictated by that energy. Ordinary people have the freedom to do what they wish. All this talk about destiny has no meaning. Each of you has full freedom to do what you wish. After doing what you want and suffering, you claim it was because of your destiny! Whatever you do is within your power. In contrast, I have no power to move on my own. Every word I utter is at the command of *Parāśakti*, the cosmic energy.

Krishna's advice to Arjuna and to all seekers is to drop everything and surrender unto Him. That is the only and final solution.

Q: I believe I am a spiritual person. I have met spiritual masters from whom I have benefited. I seem to be guided by unseen energies. But I am not content to be where I am. I conceive the future and work hard to make that reality. Am I on the right path?

As I said earlier, all of us are spiritual beings having a human experience. We are not mere human beings in search of a spiritual destination. All of us at the core are energy. We are not matter. Therefore, we are driven by energy. Masters can guide us in traveling this energy path. But we need to give them the chance. We need to be open.

When you say that you are not content with where you are, it is a reflection of your inner restless state. The rest of the pronouncements that you are spiritual, you are energy and that masters guide you etc., arises from a restless ego. It would be an insult to attribute this restless ego to a master's guidance.

You are in the same state as billions of others. You are in a state of *rajoguṇa*, the attribute of restlessness, aggression and passion. There is nothing wrong with being in this state. It just means that you are still in the grip of your senses. It means that your senses control you and you don't control them. It means that you are on the periphery and not at the center where your spirituality is centered.

In order to be truly spiritual, you need to move to the core. The core is where you understand who you are. You understand that you are not 'I', but that you are 'we'. Even now you may pretend to be selfless and do charitable services. But they

have no meaning as long as you are credited and they give you fame. You will rarely do anything anonymously or be charitable to others when they do not respect you.

Neither the past nor the future is relevant when you are truly in the present. You do not make goals for the future and you do not regret or hold grievances from the past. The present moment is the *satva guṇa* moment where the action is passive. You are no longer restless but centered. You act, but do not worry about the outcome. Whatever the result is, you no longer measure it as success or failure. What happens is what should happen, that's all.

When you are on the right path, only the path matters, not the destination. If you consider the destination more important, it is unlikely that you are walking the right path. When you focus on the path, whatever destination you reach is right.

How do you know which attitude you are in?

Please understand that if you hold grievances, regrets or guilt from the past, you are far from the right path. People pretend that they are not emotionally connected with past events and that they are no longer disturbed by happenings or people who have seemingly wronged them in the past. Yet their blood pressure shoots up when they must face such people and recollect such events. Your body does not lie. Your voice will become shrill and you will complain. These people and events still haunt you no matter how much you deny it.

Living in denial of reality is the sign of being rooted in the past and future. The problem with denial is that you will not accept what others tell you. You are blinded by ignorance of your own behavior. You are like Duryodhana. The ego is the root cause of denial, because you feel that accepting that you are haunted by the past is a sign of weakness. Unfortunately, weaknesses do not disappear by your suppressing them. Instead, they become more harmful.

When you are in a state of self-denial due to your ego, you will not be receptive to the master. Even the master cannot help you.

You are taught how to open up these past *saṁskāras* and dissolve them, in our second and third level Life Bliss Programs. One needs to re-experience and relive these past moments in order to relieve and expunge them. The memories will stay without the emotions. They will not haunt you anymore. You can truly smile when you meet the person against whom you have held the grudge.

I also personally train and initiate people into Nithya Spiritual Healing. Before initiation, they need to complete all three levels of Life Bliss Programs. They can practice the meditation only after all their *saṁskāras* have been dissolved through these programs. Hundreds of testimonials attest to their transformation. Participants no longer hold enmity against another person after these three programs.

In the Nithya Spiritual Healers' Initiation, potential healers who become my ordained disciples must take an oath that they will heal whoever seeks their help. They must take an oath that they will heal even their worst enemy. Surprisingly, again and again, these people say that they can no longer consider anyone an enemy. They say very humbly that they no longer hold a grudge against anyone for any reason.

Sometimes when a disciple tells me that he has had an outburst of anger against another person, I ask, 'Can you smile at that person now? If there is no guilt and no grievance, there is no problem. Then the anger has been expressed as energy.'

But don't do that ten times each day and shout at people and then say that you can smile at them! Especially if these people are obliged to you or employed by you, they have no choice but to listen to you. Whether you can smile at them or not is not an issue. Can they still smile at you? That will be the deciding factor. No energy should be misused.

When you are centered, you allow the future to happen to you. You do not direct the future. You may need to make some chronological plans if you are in business, but you do not become obsessed with it. You are not worried whether the result will be one way or another. You may ask, 'How is this possible when I am engaged in business activity? I must plan and be obsessed with the results. I must be with the goal twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Only then can I succeed.'

Not true. You will only be stressed out and have a heart attack. The wealthiest people in the world are focused, not obsessed. Wealth is created by being focused on the process of creating wealth, not by being obsessed about the end result, money. Someone who is obsessed about making millions or billions will only fantasize about the money. They will neither have the time nor the inclination to be focused on the process that delivers the wealth.

For a few days, act without being obsessed about the outcome. Do whatever you need to do and are used to doing, as and when the situations arise. But do not sweat about whether the result will be as you would like it. Focus only on the action. Experiment with this attitude for three or four days.

Nothing disastrous will happen to you in three or four days. Whatever happens will only be for your good. You will find out how relaxed you are and how much more energetic you are about what needs to be done.

To be focused on the process is to be in the present moment. In the present moment you are in reality. You say that you conceive the future and work hard to make it a reality. Are you in the present moment when you work? Or are you caught in the regrets and grievances of the past and the fantasies of the future? Whether you are on the right path or not depends on the answer to this question.

Ego combined with grievances and fantasies is a dangerous mix. This was Duryodhana's state. Personalities like Hitler, Stalin and Saddam caused havoc with this combination in recent history. Others, who may not be labeled as clearly as global villains, can equally harm others as a result of this combination. All these people conceived of a future and worked obsessively towards that future. But they were so focused on their ego and satisfaction of the ego that their mind was in constant movement between the past and future. Their attention was occupied with grievances and fantasies.

This is an area where many so-called fulfillment techniques mislead people and sometimes destroy people's lives. Many are based on unconscious or subconscious visualization techniques such as using the alpha state of mind. These are positively dangerous since one has no control over the unconscious mind. It is like opening a Pandora's Box. Along with what one wishes for, a host of unwanted *saṃskāras* come into fruition. This is what they mean when they say, 'Be careful what you wish for, you may get it.'

Others advise you to visualize in the conscious state. If such techniques worked, everyone would be a millionaire. Who does not desire to be rich, healthy and happy? If it is so easy to achieve that by constantly repeating it in your conscious mind through some process, there should be no poor, unhealthy and unhappy people in this world. All these self-improvement programs make the designers and promoters rich, no one else.

These methods do not work because intents only work when there is no self-contradiction. There are two extremes when self-contradiction does not exist. The first is when one is completely deluded by the ego, as with Duryodhana, Hitler and Stalin. Their self-obsession was so complete that there was no self-doubt about their own fantasies. There is no reality in this state. There is no intelligence to accept reality. Such people are in complete denial. This is their route to self-destruction.

The other extreme where there is no self-contradiction is the enlightened state. The enlightened being is always in reality and aware of himself. There is no self-contradiction at this level. But unlike the state of Duryodhana, this is an egoless state. In either of these states, intent becomes reality since there is no self-contradiction between what is desired and what is considered possible.

In every other state, there is self-contradiction between the present-moment reality and the future intent. This prevents any process from working, whatever the form of visualization. To make the intent work in reality is to make the intent congruent with reality. This happens only in a superconscious state of awareness brought about by meditation.

In the meditative state, you are in the energy field of the cosmos. You are the same energy as the universe. The energy guides you. Whatever you seek will match with what is to happen. In fact, if you are truly in a meditative state, you will have no desire to seek. Whatever happens is acceptable.

If you truly believe that there is a supreme power, even if you are still unaware that you are an inherent part of this supreme power, when you pray with the faith that this energy has the power to grant you what you wish, why don't you also trust that it has the intelligence to decide what to give you and when to give it!

This awareness can change the way you see your future. There is a supreme intelligence guiding your life and your fortune. All you need to do is trust that supreme power.



The Act And The Actor

18.1 Arjuna said, 'Krishna, Killer of the demon Kesi, I wish to understand what the essence of renunciation is and what being a monk is.'

Arjuna speaks now after being silent for a long time.

He will stop speaking soon. He has just a few words. He is not questioning. He just expresses a few doubts. The arrogance or violence in Arjuna's being has disappeared. He has become like a flower due to the experience of the cosmic vision that Krishna showered on him. I cannot even call these words doubts. He just wants to hear the truth from Krishna again and again.

Sometimes after listening to the whole discourse, disciples ask me to repeat a joke or a story once more! They have heard it once but want to hear it again. Especially from the master, listening to certain things again and again gives great joy.

The words of a master are energy. These words drill deep into you and transform you. At the time of listening, you may not realize their impact. But they never fail to impact you. Arjuna asks some of these questions in order to hear Krishna again.

Arjuna says, 'O Mighty One, I wish to understand the purpose of renunciation and of the monastic life of *sanyās*. O Hrishikesa (another name for Krishna meaning one who is in complete control of His senses), please tell me the truth.'

As I told you, it is not that Arjuna does not know. He has just heard the whole thing. Still, he wants to listen to it once more. Sometimes we enjoy listening to the same thing over and over.

A small story:

A man calls the lawyer's office and asks to speak to his ex-wife's lawyer.

The secretary says, 'I'm sorry Sir, but the lawyer passed away yesterday.'

The man expresses the usual condolences and disconnects. Ten minutes later, for the second time, he calls and asks to speak to his ex-wife's lawyer.

The secretary says, 'I told you ten minutes ago that he passed away last night.' Once more the man thanks her and disconnects.

Again, after ten minutes, he calls the lawyer's office and asks to talk to his ex-wife's lawyer. Now the secretary becomes a little angry and says, 'I already told you that you cannot talk to him. He died yesterday. Can't you understand?'

The man replies, 'Yes ma'am, I understand. But it gives me such joy to hear it that I am calling again and again!'

So it is not that we do not understand, but it gives us great joy to listen to the same thing again and again! Like that, Arjuna wants to listen to the same truth again and again.

Arjuna wants to know why a person would want to sacrifice everything and what is the process of renunciation.

In India it is often difficult to distinguish a renunciate, a *sanyāsi*, from a common beggar. Both seek alms. Both possess very little. And both are homeless. Many people take the easy path and treat the *sanyāsi* like a beggar and shoo him off. This attitude is far more prevalent in South India, especially in Tamilnadu, where there has been a lot of propaganda against the Hindu religion and spirituality.

I tell my disciples, 'When in doubt treat the beggar as if he were a monk. If you have money to give, what harm is there if you give it to benefit another person?' Some people tell me, 'But *Swamiji*, they are cheating us!'

So what? Get cheated, that's all. When you give, give unconditionally or don't give at all. When you give unconditionally, not expecting anything in return, what difference does it make whether you give to a monk or a beggar. If you expect that a monk will bless you if you give and that the blessing will have effect, why can't the blessing of a beggar have the same effect? And how do you know that a person wearing a monk's garb is truly leading a monk's life?

Quite often people give to those wearing a monk's garb because they are conditioned to give to them and they are afraid to refuse. They believe that if the monk curses them they will have problems. So, giving alms to a *sanyāsi* is like taking out insurance. You expect that your merits are getting noted down in a cosmic record and will be read on the Day of Judgment to decide whether you go to hell or heaven.

Please understand, there is no hell or heaven. These are illusions used by religions to control you through fear of hell and greed for heaven. No one keeps a list of your merits and offences. No St. Peter will be at the Pearly Gates waiting for you. Nor will Lord Yama (the Hindu god of death) be waiting on a buffalo to pronounce judgment upon you.

I tell people who wish to donate to my mission and ashram, not to do it hoping that they will be guaranteed a place in heaven. 'There will be no Nithyananda waiting to guide you into heavenly suites when you die,' I tell them. There is no exchange offer that you pay now and go to heaven later. When you do good deeds in this world, you are already in heaven. When you cause problems to everyone and yourself, you are in hell.

Make it simple. Give unconditionally if you can afford it. Give even if you cannot afford it. That is when giving becomes truly effective. When you sacrifice what you cannot afford to sacrifice, by the mere act of giving, you become a renunciate, a *sanyāsi*. How noble it is!

Arjuna is confused about the act and the actor. What is important is the act. Anyone can be the actor.

Q: Swamiji, you said that renouncing one's ego is the ultimate step in renunciation and that compassion is the outcome. Please explain how this occurs.

Love and compassion are the end results of true renunciation. This renunciation needs great courage since the basic requirement for moving into the world of love and compassion is dissolution of your ego. That is not easy to do.

We cling to our ego like an infant monkey to its mother. We are ready to die for it, but we are not ready to let it die because it defines us. It gives us an identity. It gives us a separate existence. It makes us feel important and significant.

But the ego is a false phenomenon and these feelings are rooted in fallacy. Deep down we are aware that the identity and importance that ego gives is bogus. We know that they are phony. They are bondage, not support. We know it, yet we don't want to know it. We are aware of it, yet we don't want to know it. We are aware of it yet we want to be oblivious to it. This is the human dilemma.

Life with ego is misery because we cannot be joyful if we are rooted in something false. Only Truth can release the energies of joy in us. Ego is the greatest lie; all other lies are byproducts of it. Because it is a lie, it creates a thousand and one problems around itself. It hides behind those problems. It creates such a great facade of misery that you get involved in that suffering and you forget everything about the root cause.

The moment ego is dropped, your life instantly goes through a radical change. It goes through a revolution. All that it requires is your decision. If you want to drop it you can drop it right now. Nothing prevents you from dropping it except yourself.

Ego is like darkness. It has no substance on its own. You cannot remove darkness physically, can you? You can only remove darkness by bringing in light. The positive nature of light automatically and effortlessly removes the darkness. So it is with ego. It is the darkness born out of the ignorance of our true self. We fail to realize that we are one with the universe because of the illusion of ego. Love for our fellow beings is the light that destroys this ego. You fall in ego and rise in spirituality.

Ego drops when communion happens between a master and a disciple in total silence, and from heart to heart, not from mind to mind. The master says nothing. The disciple hears nothing. Yet everything is said and everything is heard. Nothing is said. Nothing is heard, yet everything is understood.

The master-disciple relationship is the most mysterious phenomenon in Existence. It is not intellectually comprehensible. It cannot be proved in a logical way. It is not logical at all. Those who become *sanyāsins* out of a logical conviction by listening to masters and becoming convinced that what the masters say is true, are only on the periphery. The true disciple has nothing to do with what the master is saying; the true disciple has something to do with what the master is.

The true disciple falls in love. It is not a question of conviction. It is something more mysterious and transcendental. Hence, a real disciple cannot explain to anybody what has happened. Everybody will think that he has gone mad, that he has been hypnotized and that he is no longer in control of his senses.

People who think like that are not to blame. The whole fault is the disciple's, but he cannot explain. What can the disciple do about it? The fault lies with reality itself. Certain things are beyond explanation. They elude rationalization. And in fact, life begins when you come in contact with something incomprehensible, inexplicable, indefinable and unprovable; yet somewhere deep down, your heart says it is so. It is falling totally in love, and it is a love of an entirely new quality.

This love is not limited to the master but it is experienced towards the entire world. You no longer think in terms of 'I,' but in terms of 'you'. This is compassion. This feeling of unconditional, uncalled for and uncontrollable love is compassion. This happens when your ego surrenders.



Charity Must Be Selfless

18.2 Krishna said, the wise describe the essence of sanyās as giving up all selfish work based on desire, and renunciation as the freedom from all attachment to the results of one's actions.

18.3 Some learned men say that all kinds of result-based activities are sins and should be given up, but there are yet other sages who maintain that acts of service, charity and austerity should never be given up.

18.4 Arjuna, here is what I say about renunciation; there are three kinds of renunciation explained.

18.5 Acts of service, charity and austerity are not to be given up; they should be performed. Even the sages are purified by sacrifice, charity and penance.

18.6 Arjuna, all acts of duty must also be performed without any expectation of result. That is My considered opinion.

Krishna replies: 'Bharata, now hear my judgment about renunciation. Renunciation is of many types. Let me explain the truth.'

And then He starts.

Bhagavān says that some learned masters say that giving up activities based on material desires is renunciation. Others say that giving up the results is renunciation, *tyāg*. Hence some say that giving up activity is renunciation whereas others say that it is giving up the results.

No other master is as compassionate as Krishna. He is the ultimate master. He does not merely teach. He knows it is difficult for people to believe. It takes time to believe. So He gives logic to support His teachings. Again and again, He tries His best to convince Arjuna. Considering the level that He is at, there is no need

for Him to come down to the level of Arjuna. He can say, 'This is the truth. If you want you can follow it, otherwise get out!' But He does not do that. He is compassionate. Again and again, He comes down and explains the truths step-by-step.

Some learned people recommend ritualistic actions, such as killing an animal for a sacrifice. Other learned people denounce that act. Thus there are different opinions regarding the same action by different sages. Krishna clarifies these opinions now.

After all, it is Krishna in the form of the Ultimate who originally created the scriptures and laws. Therefore any explanation from Him should be considered the last word. He says that any process of renunciation should be considered within the context in which it is performed. Renunciation can be of three types: sacrifice, charity and penance. These purify even those who are already evolved and pure.

It must be understood that the purpose of performing sacrifices is the purification or upliftment of the human being on the spiritual path. They link cosmic energy with individual energy.

Krishna says that any sacrifice done for the welfare of humanity is not to be given up. As sacrifices are meant to achieve the supreme, performing charity is recommended to purify one's heart and put one on the path of spiritual progress.

Sacrifice is normally understood to be rituals such as *yajña* and *homa*, etc. These are the fire rituals prescribed in *vedic* literature to propitiate the deities. When carried out with awareness, these powerful techniques link us to the cosmic energy. In ancient times, living beings were also sacrificed to the ritual fire based upon the idea that their spirits would move into higher planes. Those who performed these sacrificial rituals had full understanding and awareness that the body is a mere shell and the spirit cannot be destroyed when offered to the fire. The spirit is thus purified and enhanced in evolutionary terms.

However, these may be inappropriate in modern times when this understanding is absent. Nobody would want to believe that an animal being sacrificed could move up in evolution. Since these rituals have lost their inner meaning and have become mechanized, we can sense the pain involved in the sacrifice but not the purpose.

Here you must understand that Krishna talks about the reality of what existed more than five thousand years ago when these rituals were performed with awareness. In performing an *aśwamedha yajña*, a powerful king let loose his prize

horse to roam as it pleased in enemy territory and waged war with anyone who dared stop the horse. All the land that the horse covered became his vassal territory and those kings accepted the sovereignty of the owner of the horse.

When the horse returned to its home country, it was sacrificed in front of the fire pit of the *aśwamedha yajña* with the belief and awareness that its spirit would move up in evolution. It was considered a blessing for the horse, not a torture. But these things change over time with different understanding and are inappropriate in the modern age.

This is what we know from the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana that detail these sacrifices. The *Upaniṣads* talk about the metaphorical significance of these rituals. In the scriptures, reference is made to the inner *aśwamedha yajña*, meditating upon the sun that is identified with *aśwamedha*.

In our times, sacrifice refers to any selfless service. Whatever we do for others without expecting anything in return is a sacrifice. Unfortunately, many people engaged in sacrifice are more interested in seeing their pictures on the television or in newspapers than in the service. That is why their photographs are shown with them smiling into the camera!

Charitable service is giving with no expectation in return. Charity is not giving while posing for a picture that will be published in tomorrow's newspaper. That is business. Those who are truly charitable never allow others to know what they are doing. That is why it is said that your left hand should not know what your right hand is giving. Only then charity achieves its purpose.

Charity should also involve pain. You can call it charity when you cannot afford to give something away and yet you give it away. Charity must become a penance and lead to austerity if it is to be real.

Penance is denying oneself sense pleasures. Ultimately, the purpose of all spiritual exercise is to control the mind and senses. Penance is turning inwards whereas sacrifice and charity are focused outwards.

‘All these activities should be performed without attachment or expectation of results. They should be performed as a matter of duty and this is My final opinion,’ says the master.

Krishna gives His opinion. Earlier He explained what others said about renunciation, as either giving up the activity itself or the results of the activity. Now He says that His opinion on renunciation is living without attachment.

This must be understood in depth. Whether it is spiritual or worldly activity, as long as you struggle with a purpose and a goal, you can *never* relax. Please be very clear about this. The person who surrenders to the flow of life, experiences the inner space and outer space at the same time. He enjoys the inner and the outer space at the same time. Whatever Krishna has spoken in these seventeen chapters, He is now giving its gist.

Let me explain what I mean by the word surrender. Then you can understand better. Think of two intersecting lines, axes.

The vertical axis is spiritual life. The horizontal axis is material life. The point of intersection is your being. This is the goal you have. You have some goal in your material life and also in your spiritual life. To achieve your goal in your material life, you are continuously struggling and working. You are somewhere on the horizontal axis. To achieve your spiritual goal, you are again working intensely doing yoga, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, etc. You practice spiritual techniques. You are somewhere on the vertical axis. So when you struggle with material goals, you are on the horizontal line whereas when you struggle with spiritual goals, you are on the vertical line.

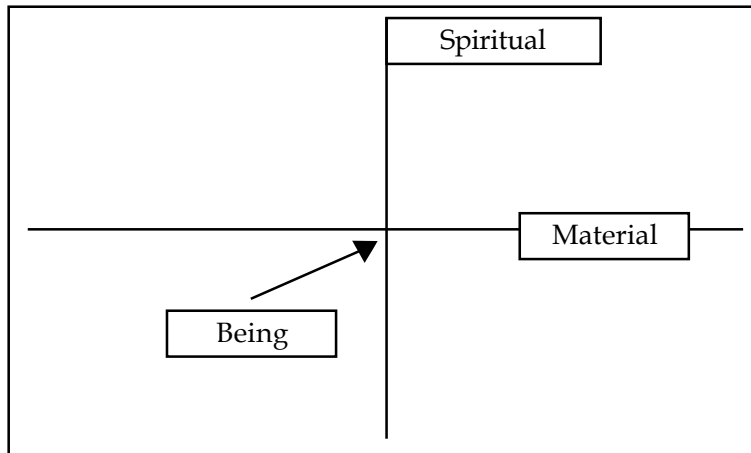
As long as you are struggling, you can struggle either in this direction or that direction. As long as you struggle in material life, you avoid spiritual life. As long as you struggle in spiritual life, you avoid material life. Both are a struggle.

Krishna says, 'Relax from both.' You may think, 'What is this funny instruction He is giving!' You think that if you relax in both you will lose both. However, the truth is that when you relax in both, you fall into your inner consciousness, your being or your inner space. When you experience this inner space, this inner consciousness, you will suddenly realize that you can explode in all directions. You do not need to choose between horizontal and vertical lines. You can travel on both lines at the same time!

Not only that, you can explode in all directions. The only difficulty is that you must surrender at least to your own being. You do not need to surrender to somebody else. To whom you surrender is unimportant. Just relax into your own being. Just relax into your inner space, into your inner consciousness. Just surrender to your own inner space. Stop your struggle in the material world and the spiritual world.

In the material world, the world of 'mine', your properties are your goal. You struggle to achieve these goals. In the spiritual world also you have certain goals,

such as enlightenment. And you constantly run to attain that goal. Actually, spiritual goals create more ego than material goals. At least with material goals, at some point, you realize that you cannot achieve real happiness by running behind them. It can be tiring. But with spiritual goals you do not even understand what you are doing. Both goals take your being away from your being. When you surrender and relax into your being, you suddenly realize you are neither the body nor the mind, to choose between the horizontal and the vertical lines.



As long as you believe you are the mind, you will be forced to choose between the vertical and horizontal lines. You will be in a dilemma because the mind wants to choose. The mind and dilemma are the same thing. The mind ceases to exist once dilemmas vanish. The mind exists as long as you have dilemmas. As long as you have confusion, the mind exists. Has your mind existed without dilemmas? No, never! You may be in a dilemma even to answer this question; that is all! The mind continues to exist only in dilemma. You continuously worry about whether to choose this or that.

A small story:

A man was sitting at home crying loudly. Usually men do not cry and especially not loudly!

His wife asks, 'Why are you crying?'

He says: 'Do you remember when your father caught us red-handed when we were together twenty years ago? He threatened me that if I did not marry you he would have me put in jail.'

The wife replies, 'Of course, I remember. Why are you crying for that?'

The man says, 'If I hadn't done what he said, I would be a free man today!'

Whenever you choose something, someday you will definitely wonder about the choice you made. The mind is based only on dilemma. The mind only exists because of dilemma. As long as you are based in your mind, you will be choosing between material and spiritual goals. The people who choose material goals will feel that they are missing spiritual life. And those who pick spiritual goals will feel they are missing material life. This is because you choose between the two.

For the first time, Krishna gives the ultimate technique for Quantum Spirituality. He is the first quantum scientist of the inner world. He says relax and surrender and you will experience the intensity of your inner consciousness. You will understand that you do not need to choose between the horizontal and vertical lines. You can explode in all 360 degrees. You need not make a choice. You experience choicelessness. Choicelessness does not mean that you do not choose anything. When you stop choosing, you will choose everything.

Similarly, surrender does not mean passive surrender or pretending to give up. Many people claim, '*Swamiji*, I have surrendered everything to God.' It is mere lip service only. It is not reality.

People come up with odd statements. They tell me, '*Swamiji*, I have given up everything, I have surrendered everything to God. Bless me so that I get a better paying job!'

Most of the time, our surrender is false. Before making a statement, please be clear about its meaning. A woman told me, '*Swamiji*, you must take care of me because I have totally surrendered to you. Please give me mental peace.'

I said, 'Okay, attend the next meditation program and we will see.'

Immediately she replied, 'I cannot spare two days!' She had just told me that she had surrendered to me!

We sometimes make statements without knowing what the reality is.

A small story:

A journalist saw a crowd gathered around an accident on the road. He tried to find out what had happened, but could not get through the crowd. He

shouted, 'Oh! My son has been hurt in the accident. Please move out of the way.' The people gave way. He moved forward, only to see that a car had hit a donkey!

Before making any statement, know the situation. Otherwise, you will suffer! With the word surrender you make that mistake. With real surrender you do not exclude anything. You include everything. You experience everything at once. You do not need to choose between horizontal and vertical lines. You can experience both and something more. You can explode! You experience something beyond your imagination. You experience different dimensions of your being.

Again, when I say surrender, you do not need to surrender to any God or guru. God or guru are symbols or representations. Just surrender to your own being, to your own consciousness, to your own inner space. The problem is you do not respect your inner space. That is why in the initial level you need an entity called God or guru.

Somebody asked me, '*Swamiji*, I have surrendered to you. What should I do?'

I told him, 'If you really surrender, you will not have that question! You will be guided from within. When you fully surrender, intuition or divine intelligence automatically guides you. As long as you have doubts, you have not surrendered.'

Q: *Swamiji, you said that rituals connect us with the cosmic energy. Please can you explain how.*

The Isavasya Upanishad says beautifully: *īśā vāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* - From energy, all matter was created.

When Albert Einstein, the famous physicist read these words, he exclaimed: I had developed the theory that all matter can be converted to energy. Five thousand years ago these great masters have gone beyond what I have found out, by saying that all matter came from energy. Spirituality indeed starts where science stops!

The Taittreya Upanishad says that from the cosmic energy came the energy of space. From space came the energy of air. From air came the energy of fire. From fire came the energy of water. From water came the energy of earth. From earth came plant life. From plant life humans were created.

The Taittreya Upanishad goes on to develop the theme of the five layers or sheaths that surround our body, called the *panca kośas*.

The first and outermost layer is the food layer, the physical or gross layer, the *annamaya kośa*. The next inner layer is the *prānamaya kośa*, where the breath energy resides. The next layer is the *manomaya kośa*, or the mental layer from which our senses operate and generate thoughts. Further inward is the *vijñānamaya kośa*, the wisdom layer where our energy centers, the *cakras*, lie. The innermost layer surrounding the Self or *ātman* is *ānandamaya kośa*, the bliss layer. Beyond all this is the *ātman*, the Self, that is the reflection of the universal energy within us, the Divine, God or whatever name you wish to give it.

In the Atma Spurana Program, you are taken on a journey through these five layers to understand what happens in these sheaths surrounding our inner Self. In the Nithyananda Spurana Program or NSP we take you through the seven layers the spirit passes through as it leaves the body. These seven layers are also related to the five *kośas*. The meditation techniques specifically designed for each layer in these programs provide an understanding of how your body-mind-spirit system operates. So these techniques heal physiological, emotional and mental blocks in each layer and provide a glimpse of the inner consciousness.

Humans digest four of the five elemental energies described in the Taittreya Upanishad: air, fire, water and earth are ingested in one form or other by humans. We breathe air, drink water, cook and warm through fire, and we feed off the earth.

The energy of space or ether, *ākāśa*, is not directly accessible. The mind or ego layer that surrounds us prevents us from absorbing this energy, the biggest elemental energy source. This creates the illusion of separation from the elemental energy from which we are formed, and it insulates us.

Meditation is the only method through which we can drop the mind layer and open ourselves to receive the energy of the universe, through the energy of space.

Fire rituals, such as *homas* and *yajñas*, are mass meditation techniques since they help link a large group to the elemental energy. In a fire ritual, the energy of space is invoked into the fire through air. It is then transferred to the water in the pots that are kept around the fire. The water is then poured onto idols, humans or the earth, thus transferring the energy to them. Our great sages developed this simple technique to absorb the energy of the universe.

These original methods have been reduced to mere rituals today. The spirit has been removed from spirituality to leave only 'rituality' behind! When you become aware of the meaning behind these powerful rituals, something opens up within you. The awareness of your inner consciousness expands. That is why Krishna specifically stipulates that these sacrifices should only be practiced with awareness.

Meditation opens us up at the individual level to receive the cosmic energy, whereas rituals, such as *homas*, open us up at the mass level. We had a mass *yajña* in the city of Salem in Tamilnadu, India in 2006. One thousand *yajñas* were conducted simultaneously by *brahmacāris* trained at our ashram. Nearly 10,000 people participated in the performance of the ritual over two days. Effects of such rituals when done in the presence of and by masters have far reaching effects.



Duty Without Delusion

18.7 Prescribed duties should never be renounced. If one gives up his prescribed duties through the illusion of renunciation, this is said to be in the state of ignorance.

18.8 Anyone who gives up prescribed duties as troublesome, or out of fear, is said to be in the state of aggression, and does not benefit from renunciation.

18.9 But he who performs what is prescribed, as a matter of duty, without expectation or attachment to the results, his renunciation is of the nature of satva, goodness, O Arjuna.

18.10 Those who neither hate disagreeable work nor are attached to pleasant work are in a state of intelligence, goodness and renunciation, free of all doubts.

18.11 Human beings cannot give up all activities. Therefore the one who has renounced the fruits of such activity is one who has truly renounced.

18.12 To one who has not renounced, the three kinds of fruits of action — desirable, undesirable and mixed — accrue after death, but not to one who has renounced.

Krishna says that *nitya karma* or obligatory duties must be followed with discipline and consistency. Not doing these takes us into the state of *tamas*, inaction born out of ignorance and laziness.

Nitya karmas vary from person to person. The duties of a householder are different from those of a monk or a student. Each has clear guidelines in terms of what they should and should not do.

Many times the idea of dropping our responsibilities and taking up a different role is more attractive than growing in awareness so that we can perform our own

duties well and without attachment. Be very clear, without the right attitude and awareness, no role that we take up will work out for us.

Instead of taking up responsibility and expanding, watching television or daydreaming seems much more pleasant and easy. We would rather do that than meditate or perform *pūjā* or whatever is our prescribed duty.

In our *ashram* routine, everyone must attend *Guru pūjā* at six am. This includes permanent residents and *brahmacāris* as well as those who stay there for courses or healing. You should see the reluctance with which some outsiders attend the *pūjā*. Of course quite a few are still asleep at six am. and we do not have a police force to find them and wake them up!

Giving up what needs to be done because it is uncomfortable is not renunciation! That is convenient inaction born out of *rajas*. After attending a course many ask how many meditation techniques they can do each day. I tell them, 'Do at least one properly.' A week later, after the fever has cooled down, if I ask, they sheepishly say, 'I do not have time to practice even one meditation, *Swamiji*.'

All of us find time for everything except meditation. We find time to give appointments to everyone else except ourselves! Who is the loser?

Krishna says doing what needs to be done because that is what is recommended, without attachment to the action and without desire is the ideal condition of *satva*.

Krishna has said this many times in the Gita. He repeats it again so that the message sinks in. Do what must be done. Do what your duty is, based on your societal or religious beliefs and codes. However, do it without attachment and expectation of results.

The consciousness of 'I' and 'mine', in terms of the performance of the activity should be absent.

Often in traditional homes people chant prayers or *mantras* as a mere chore. They try to concentrate, yet they are disturbed by every activity happening in the house. If they were truly absorbed in what they were doing, they would not notice the disturbance. These people are so attached to 'their' doing it and 'their' doing it well, that everything disturbs them. On the other hand, watch a child recite a *mantra*. He plays with it and has fun!

Annamalai Swamigal in Tiruvannamalai initiated me into a meditation technique when I was not even ten. For two years all I did was play with that technique. That is all. In two years the technique had its effect!

Krishna says that a person in the *satvic* mode of calmness and awareness is undisturbed by external conditions. He is not bothered whether someone appreciates or condemns what he does. He is clear what he should do and he carries on.

A small story:

Sadashiva Sastry was the landlord of a village. He was known as a pious person who was always ready to help others. Whenever there was a temple festival, he undertook all the expenses. If anybody fell ill and needed hospitalization, he met the cost of transport and medicines. He was well known in the village and so were his acts of kindness. However, he was always in a serious mood, never cheerful or laughing.

One day his daughter asked, 'Appa, why are you always so serious and morose? Are you not well?'

He replied, 'I am fine. There is nothing wrong.' But she insisted in her queries and he finally said, 'See, I am doing so many kind acts for the village people, yet nobody has ever bothered to thank me.'

He was still remembering all that he had done and carrying the burden of his good deeds!

Renunciation is in the true spirit and is done out of goodness only when a person renounces the expectation of result.

It is natural that a human being cannot remain still without doing some work. Man must be doing something, anything, all the time. If not physically, at least mentally he does something. Even in sleep, he dreams. If we close our eyes, we watch our inner television. If we plug our ears and close our eyes and stay in an insulated room, we are still filled with inner chatter.

Only an enlightened person truly keeps his body and mind still. So the normal man is never without activity. This being the case, the only way man can be comfortable and at peace with himself is by not having any expectation of the result of his thoughts or words or actions. This can be achieved by every one of us. Krishna says that one who is not concerned about the fruits of his action has truly renounced.

Attachment to action and to the results of action creates more desires. Even when an action has been completed and the expected result achieved, as long as one is attached to that action and its result, another desire crops up. Even when

one desire is fulfilled, another unfulfilled desire rises. This is a constant, consistent sequence.

This is what I call *karma*. *Karma* is nothing but unfulfilled desires. As long as we have attachment to the action as 'doer', which in turns creates an expectation of reward or punishment, we are caught in the cycle of *karma* and *saṁsāra*. Our concern about whether an action or the result is good, bad or a mix of both, follows us as our mental attitude or *vāsanā* after death.

Please understand that no one is 'up there' keeping an account of our deeds and misdeeds. Our own spirit does that job. So we can never escape! No amount of propitiation or contribution to 'noble' causes will erase the knowledge from our inner Self of what we have done. When we die, the body perishes but the spirit moves on to another body. That spirit carries its earlier mental attitude, its *vāsanā*. There is no exception to this rule. *Samskāras* are the carried-over desires and they cause the cycle of *saṁsāra*, birth, death and rebirth.

However, we have no unfulfilled desires, *karma*, *saṁskāra* or *vāsanā* left when we renounce attachment to 'doership' and become a mere witness to both the action and the result. This means we act without expectation and attachment to the result of our action. Such a person breaks out of this cycle of *saṁsāra*.

Q: You said that we are divine in our consciousness. Why did we degrade ourselves from God to humans?

If you ask me why did we do that, you must ask yourself, 'Why did I do that?' We are responsible. It is not someone outside of us.

This idea that 'we have degraded ourselves, we must go back' is a technique to make us understand our actual nature. It is not that we have come down. We have simply forgotten that we are divine energy. We have forgotten our true nature. That is why we feel that we have fallen.

If you really came down, how could you go back again? If you can come down once from that state, you can come down again after some years. Then it is not permanent. If you go up, can't you come down after five hundred years? You may. So that is not a great thing. We have never fallen. We are in the same state. We are continuously connected to the Divine.

The only thing is that we have forgotten that we are divine. Why?

Vivekananda beautifully explains, 'That question cannot be answered from this plane. The question is from the logical plane, but in the ultimate spiritual sense there is no logic.'

A few questions cannot be explained or understood, unless we experience. This question falls in that category.

These questions, 'How have we forgotten our true nature? How have we degraded ourselves? How have we forgotten that we are God?' can never be answered. When you experience enlightenment, you understand how you have forgotten or how you remembered. Now, from this plane, this question can never be answered. In the dream state, when you are dreaming, you feel as if you have become somebody else. Only when you come out of the dream do you know!



Technology Of Surrender

18.13,14 Learn from Me Arjuna, there are five causes that bring about the accomplishment of all action, as described in Sāṅkhya philosophy.

These are: physical body that is the seat of action, the attributes of nature or guṇa that are the Doer, the eleven organs of perceptions and action by the life forces and finally the Divine.

18.15 These five factors are responsible for whatever right or wrong actions a man performs by deed, word and thought.

18.16 Those who think they, their body and spirit, are the doers, are ignorant and do not see things as they are.

In these verses, Krishna gives the exact technology of surrender.

These two verses can be called techniques.

Krishna lists five factors from Sāṅkhya philosophy responsible for our activities. These are the body-mind system, the operator of the body-mind system (that is the individual), the senses, different efforts causing the activities and finally the ultimate power of God. All activities, right or wrong, good or bad, are caused by these five factors. If however, the individual considers himself to be the doer, his body and mind, he is not aware.

Krishna uses the word *ātman* while saying that one who perceives one's spirit or Self as the agent, the doer, or the performer, does not see and is not aware. Krishna draws a distinction between the individual Self and the cosmic energy. He differentiates between *ātman* and *Brahman*, *mānava* and *Deva*, *nara* and *Narayana*, self and *Parāśakti*.

Krishna concludes that while philosophical discussion mentions five players in all activities, the ultimate controller is the Divine. We are immersed in our body-mind-

spirit system and caught in our sensory perceptions and believe that we are the power behind all that we do. So long as we have this deluded belief, we are rooted in ignorance.

Whatever you may understand as yourself, your body-mind-spirit system is the totality of many things. And individually each is responsible for something. In spite of this, you think that 'you' are responsible for the whole thing. That is where the trouble starts. Krishna gives the technology for the deeper levels of surrender.

As we saw earlier, there are three levels of surrender. The first is intellectual surrender. This means you accept that the master's intellect is sharper than your intellect; His intellect is of a higher order than yours. This is intellectual surrender.

Next is emotional surrender. This is trusting that the master's guidance on the emotional plane is more intelligent than your emotions. The third is surrendering the senses, your cognition or the root of cognition itself.

Surrendering the intellect is easy because it continuously tortures you. You have suffered with the intellect for many years. You want to get rid of it. So you surrender it. Surrendering the intellect is easy. When you see somebody more intelligent and with clearer thinking, you just surrender.

For example, when you hire a consultant, you surrender to his ideas. When you take on a lawyer, you surrender to his ideas because you know his intellect is sharper than yours in that field. The same happens when you go to an accountant. In the spiritual field also, when you see a person who knows more, you surrender your intellect to that person. That is not a big thing. Surrendering intellectually happens easily. Most of the time you want to get rid of your intellect. Finding somebody to dump your intellect on allows you to relax from it.

Next comes emotional surrender. This happens when you feel deeply connected to the master after experiencing some meditation or understanding. You respect His emotions more than your own. The master's emotions mean the things He guides you in, the way He wants you to live.

You give more importance to these things than what you think of as life. Slowly He becomes the center of your life. You respect Him more than other emotional attachments. Priorities shift. The master becomes the number one priority at the emotional level. Emotional surrender is when you feel totally connected at the emotional level.

Next is a deeper level of surrender. After listening to these seventeen days of discourses, you can understand this deeper level of surrender. This is the level of

the senses. The surrender of the senses means that your senses listen to what He says. Normally, when you listen to me, a filter in your mind discounts what you do not agree with. You hear what you want to hear. However, when intellectual and emotional surrender happen, you are ready to surrender this disbelief and unblock your senses.

Once a disciple asked his master, 'Why should I surrender?'

The master asked, 'How do you know whatever you think you know about yourself?'

The disciple replied, 'I know myself through my senses.'

The master asked, 'Who do you think you are according to your senses?'

The disciple said, 'As far as I know, I am the body and mind.'

His master responded, 'You are God, not just body and mind.'

The master said, 'Only when you surrender your senses, will you realize the truth of what I am saying. The moment you trust me more than your senses, you experience that you are God. You then understand the meaning of *tatvamasi* (literally '*You Are That*', meaning 'you are divine').'

The master again and again tries to show that you are God. I keep saying, 'I am not here to prove that I am God. I am here to prove that you are God.'

The master stands for the idea that you are the infinite. He shows you various dimensions of your inner self that you have not explored or experienced. He shows you so many dimensions of your being. The master stands for your multidimensional being. He tries to show you that it is possible. He shows that if it is possible for him, it is possible for you also. But as long as you believe your senses, you think that you are the body and mind.

When you trust the master more than your senses, you understand that the master's words are the truth and not your senses. Then you experience the truth of the master's words. When the master says you are God, you suddenly realize the truth for yourself. You understand that you are God. You realize that you are not the body or mind as your senses have led you to believe. When you believe the master's words more than your senses, you experience this truth.

Two voices are speaking from two different levels. On the one hand, your senses tell you that you are the body and mind. On the other hand, the master tells you that you are God; you are divine and have many dimensions to your being. He tells you to enjoy and experience everything. As long as you listen to your senses, you will not even hear what the master says. When you move away from your senses and come to the master, you hear Him and experience the truth that you are divine.

In the inner world, the first and last tool you need is complete surrender. Only then can you wake up to the truth. If Arjuna had trusted only his senses, he would have been at best a good warrior and king. Instead he trusted Krishna more than his senses and became enlightened. He experienced the truth of Krishna. When Krishna said that the crow was green, he saw a green crow. Such was his faith.

You can experience Krishna consciousness not just by surrendering the intellect and emotions but also by surrendering the root of the intellect and emotions, that is the senses. The senses supply the data. When you surrender them, the source of the data is surrendered.

You receive all information about yourself through the senses. Please understand that you do not know anything about yourself. You respect yourself because of data you collect about yourself through the senses of others. If somebody says, 'You are beautiful,' you make an entry in a notebook that you are beautiful according to so and so. Again, when somebody says that you are intelligent, you make an entry that you are intelligent, as told by so and so. If somebody says that you are tall, dark and handsome, that entry is made and the name mentioned. When you are told that you are dumb, another entry is made!

At the end of the day, you make a survey and assess what everybody said. You see that seventy-two percent of the people say that you are intelligent; twenty percent say that you are dumb and the rest do not know. Based on these statistics you decide about yourself. You decide that if seventy-two percent of the people say that you are intelligent, all of them cannot be fools. What they say must be right. Therefore, you must be intelligent! Thus your conclusion about yourself is based on what others say about you.

The whole day you conduct a signature campaign. You continuously go around asking people to tell you something about yourself. As a result, the senses give you an idea of what you are. Krishna asks Arjuna to surrender these senses.

When you surrender your senses, the root of your idea of yourself, you lose your identification with the body and mind. As long as you believe your senses, you think that you are the body and mind. Only when you believe the master's words more than your senses, do you realize the truth that you are divine. On one hand, your senses say you are the body and mind. On the other hand, the master tells you that you are divine and in eternal bliss. He tells you that you are the consciousness beyond body and mind.

It is up to you to choose. If you believe the senses, you cannot believe the master. And if you believe the master, you cannot believe your senses. Your way of life decides whether you surrender to your senses or your master. It is for you to decide.

Krishna says that only when you surrender at all three levels do you have the ultimate experience. Let me tell you this, surrender itself is enlightenment. Please do not think enlightenment will be issued to you after surrendering. No! It is not a paycheck you receive by courier. Surrender itself is enlightenment. At that moment, you experience the Truth.

Usually we play with words. At least be aware of the moments when you play with words. People tell me that they have surrendered their life to Krishna, Venkateshwara or Shiva. Then they say that their only wish is to be happy. If they have truly surrendered, surrender is enough. They will not need to ask for anything else. Sometimes people ask if they need to meditate since they have surrendered to God. If they have surrendered, they will have no doubts, nor will they need meditation! If they have doubts, they need meditation. As long as doubts remain, surrender has not happened, because the moment you surrender, *you* disappear.

A beautiful verse in Tamil says, 'When you give your 'I' and 'mine' to Existence, *Parāśakti* or Existence gives Her 'I' and 'Mine' to you.' Both bank accounts merge and become one. It becomes a joint account! You have nothing to lose.

When you think of yourself as body and mind, you have *sariram rogamayam* and *manam sohamayam*. *Sariram rogamayam* means that the body is filled with diseases. *Manam sohamayam* means that the mind is filled with sorrows or depression. Since that is the case, what can we surrender? Absolutely nothing, except a body full of diseases and a mind full of sorrows. When you drop these two at the feet of the Divine, He gives you His body and mind! And it becomes, *sariram devamayam*, *manam sukhamayam*, *atma anandamayam*, meaning, you get in exchange a divine body,

a mind in happiness as well as a third thing: a soul in bliss! A 'give one, get three free' offer!

Manickavasagar, the great enlightened master, sings a beautiful Tamil song to Shankara (Lord Shiva):

*tandadu entanai, kondadu untanai,
sankara yaarkolo saturar?*

He says, 'I gave myself to You and received You in return. Who benefited most from this bargain? Who is more intelligent, O Shankara?'

In surrender, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Surrendering does not mean giving up everything. It does not mean giving up your property. Keep everything; however, take care that you do not internalize them. Do not judge yourself based on your properties. You are far greater than you think. Do not judge yourself based on your bank balance. Do not judge yourself based on your relationships. Do not judge yourself based on name and fame. Do not judge yourself based on your friends. You are greater than all these things put together.

As long as you judge yourself based on these things, you internalize these into your being. These become the central points in your life. They push and pull you in all directions. You will not have yourself for your being. As long as these are the major factors in your life, these things will rule you. Even so, you are greater than all these things put together.

Understand that you are something beyond these things. The moment you wake up to this truth, you will not allow yourself to be put into any frame based upon bank balance, relationships, attitudes or name and fame. These things cannot be used to judge you. The moment you wake up to this truth, you have surrendered. I simply ask you to surrender these small ideas you have about yourself.

On the surface of the vast ocean, small bubbles are formed. One bubble starts thinking that it is an individual long lasting entity. It thinks that it must become strong. It lasts only for a few moments. Yet within those few moments, it collects other bubbles around it. One bubble is its wife, another bubble is its son and so on. Some are called parents or relatives, still others are friends, and so on. It collects bubbles on all sides to protect itself.

It collects a few grains of sand from the beach and thinks it is its property. It thinks one grain of sand is its bank balance, another is its jewelry and treasures and so on. Then it builds a fence to protect its property. How long can the bubble play this game? Only for a few seconds! Before it can complete its game, it disappears back into the ocean.

The bubble was part of the ocean in all three instances: when it was created, when it existed and when it disappeared. Even though it claimed to be different from the ocean, even though it thought it was an individual, and even though it thought many people and things belonged to it, it was always part of the ocean and very soon disappeared into it also!

In the same way, for a few moments you think you exist as an individual being in this universal consciousness. Within those few moments you catch hold of a few people as your relatives and friends. This makes you feel safe. You collect a few things as possessions. You feel secure with these things around you. With these things you form an opinion about yourself. You play the same game as the bubble.

Suddenly the whole thing disappears. Before the game started, while the game is going on and when the game ends, whether you understand it or not, realize it or not, experience it or not, you belong to the ocean. You are God. You are one with Existence.

You are playing a game. You register your marriage to another bubble. You register some grains of sand as your property. The registrar is another bubble! A larger bubble is the ruler of the land or that bit of the ocean! And there is an understanding among the bubbles, 'You will not hit me and I will not hit you! You will not take my bubble and I will not take yours!' The whole game goes on in this way. Suddenly within one moment the whole thing is part of the ocean again.

When I say surrender, I mean wake up to the truth that you are in the ocean. When you are born, when you think you are an individual or when you become enlightened, you are always in the ocean. Just wake up! Waking up to this ultimate Truth is surrender. Surrender these small ideas about yourself and wake up to reality. As a result, surrender automatically happens in your inner space, your inner consciousness. Otherwise you just play with the word surrender.

We use inflated words when we define ourselves. We do not realize that we are beyond these descriptions. One day a follower used exaggerated words about himself in front of me. After he left I told my disciple that he seemed to be suffering from an inferiority complex. My disciple was perplexed. He asked how it could be called an inferiority complex when he boasted so much. I told him, 'Understand, each of us is God. Hence anything we say about ourselves that is lesser than that, is an inferiority complex!'

Any estimation you have of yourself except that you are God is an underestimation! You suffer from an inferiority complex if you think of yourself as

anything other than God. Drop your ideas about yourself. Wake up to the truth that you are the ocean.

Some fish swim along with the current. Others swim against the current. Whether they go with or against the current, all the fish are in the water. Whether you flow with Existence or fight it, you are one with it. Whether or not you have realized you are divine, you are divine. There is no choice in this. There is only one choice, realize and enjoy or continue to struggle and suffer; that's all! You may try to create stronger fences around yourself or collect more bubbles around you, but can you ask the wave not to come? Whatever you may do, the whole thing is only a drama of a few seconds.

The next problem is what to do if you cannot surrender.

Some people tell me, '*Swamiji*, I am unable to surrender. What can I do?' Do not worry, because you have nothing to surrender. By understanding that you have nothing to surrender, you have already surrendered. Just relax. Whether you surrender or not, this is the truth. Whether you surrender or not, Existence takes care. Automatically life continues and you will relax. That relaxation itself is surrender.

Relax into the flow of life and wake up to the truth that you are something greater than your body and mind as suggested by your senses. You are led by society to think that you are something. Now wake up to the truth that you are greater than what you can imagine. You are beyond any imagination you can have of yourself. Surrendering will give you a new consciousness. You will not be the same person. One single moment of surrender will transform your whole life. You will be a new being.

There are three levels of birth, three types of *garbha* or wombs, according to the ancient scriptures. The first is the *bhū garbha*. This is the womb of a woman that gives birth to an infant. This is connected to the *mūlādhāra cakra*, the lowest of the seven *cakras* or energy centers in the human body.

Next is the *hṛt garbha*. This is the womb of the heart and is witnessed in the case of real artists. A singer for example, conceives the song or music in his heart and then delivers it. Likewise, an artist or sculptor conceives the concept in his heart first and then delivers it. That is the reason artists get such satisfaction from their work. Their life itself is so fulfilling because they give birth continuously.

A woman feels fulfillment when she gives birth to a child and becomes a mother. She overflows with satisfaction. In the same way, when an artist creates a painting, poem, sculpture or song, he feels an overwhelming satisfaction and fulfillment. For the poet, the womb is in his heart, the *hṛt garbha*.

The ultimate is the *jñāna garbha*, which happens in the highest energy center, the *sahasrāra cakra* - on the top of the head. In the *jñāna garbha*, all the spiritual ideas are conceived in the head and worked on. Suddenly one moment you give birth to a new you, to an enlightened being.

So there are three levels of *garbha*. The *bhū garbha* is the first level, which we are familiar with. The next is the *hṛt garbha*, which a few artists reach. The ultimate is the *jñāna garbha* where you receive the teachings of the master and His presence into your *sahasrāra cakra*. You work with yourself and give birth to yourself as an enlightened being.

Receive this concept of surrender, this truth, and work on it. Suddenly you will wake up and give birth to yourself as an enlightened being. The moment you understand you belong to the ocean, that you are from it, that you are in it and that you will disappear into it, you will realize that you will never die, because you are the ocean.

As long as you identify with the bubble, you feel insecure. The instinct to survive and the instinct to possess torture you. The moment you realize that you are the ocean, the instinct to survive disappears because there is no death for you. There is nothing to fear, nothing to feel insecure about. Death creates fear as long as you think you are the bubble.

The moment you realize that you are the ocean, there is nothing to possess because everything belongs to you. There is nothing to lose and nothing to acquire. Hence, the instinct to possess disappears. I am not asking you to legally throw away your possessions. You do not need to throw away whatever you have done for your 'I' and 'mine'. You do not need to throw away whatever you have. Just do not internalize them. Within yourself be aware that you are something greater than anything you can possibly possess.

At the age of seven, your toys are important to you. Do they hold the same importance today? You have neither renounced them nor are you attached to them. They are just there. Do you feel that you must return home because the toys are there? No! Do you feel the toys make your life a torture and that you must

renounce them? No! You feel neither attached nor detached. You have grown beyond them.

Rāga means attachment. *Arāga* means detachment. *Virāga* (or *Vairāgya*) means beyond attachment and detachment. As you grew up, *vairāgya* naturally happened towards your toys. So also, when you realize that you are the ocean, *vairāgya* will happen towards the few sand particles and bubbles that you have collected and gathered around yourself. You will have gone beyond these things.

The instincts to survive and possess would no longer be relevant to you. Your property does not suddenly disappear. They are there, but you live them and enjoy them more intensely. You do not take them for granted. You do not feel bored with them. You do not think: same house, same wife and same life! You take them for granted only when you think they are your properties.

When you realize that they may be taken from you at any moment, you do not take them for granted. When you realize that you are the ocean and that they are also of the same ocean, you value them more. When you realize this, you are transformed at the level of body, mind and consciousness. When consciousness is transformed, you give birth to a new you.

Krishna goes much deeper than these three levels of surrender: surrender of the intellect, surrender of the emotions and surrender of the senses. He gives Arjuna a glimpse of the greatest surrender. He gives Arjuna a glimpse of the ultimate experience itself. Krishna already gave Arjuna the experience during *Viśvarūpa darśan*, the vision of His cosmic form. Even so, Arjuna was unable to establish himself in that experience due to fear.

Always you miss the first experience because of fear. Now Arjuna is more mature and capable of being established in the experience. Krishna gives Arjuna the experience that will stay with him forever. In the next few verses Krishna puts Arjuna into the experience of enlightenment. He wakes him up to the ultimate Truth.

A small story:

A man asked a Zen master how to become Buddha. The master just slapped him! In that instant, the man became enlightened. He experienced Buddhahood in himself. The slap simply showed him that he was already That. He merely needed to wake up from sleep.

Krishna is waking Arjuna up from the long slumber called *saṁsāra sāgara*. This can also be called unconsciousness or *tamas*. Krishna gives him a good shake by giving him the ultimate experience and puts him in that state forever. I was telling you about the three levels of surrender. Krishna puts Arjuna into that final level or highest level of surrender.

Q: Surrender of ego is true renunciation. But to surrender you need ego, or something like the mind. Isn't this a conflict?

Yes, it is and no it isn't. There are always different ways of looking at something.

Buddha was never dogmatic. He said that everything could be right or wrong, right and wrong. There can be right love and wrong love as well as right anger and wrong anger.

Prior to Buddha nobody thought that way. People considered love as always right and anger as always wrong. So it was about will or resolution. A man of will was always right. All cultures until then had praised willpower. On the other hand, Buddha was tremendously insightful and said that everything that can be right can also be wrong. Nothing can be absolutely right. Willpower is wrong if used by the ego. Then it enhances the ego. And that's what happens in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred.

Willpower can be right, but one must be alert and aware. Willpower can be right only if it is used for surrender. It is a paradoxical phenomenon. Ordinarily we think will and surrender are polar opposites. In spite of this, there is only one right use of will: to surrender to the Whole. Call it God, Nature, Tao or whatever you like.

Willpower in the service of the person is dangerous because the idea of the person is false. Personality is illusory. We are not separate entities. The whole universe is one organic unity. We exist together. Even a small blade of grass is connected to the faraway star. Everything is interlinked and intertwined.

It is like a spider's web. If you touch one thread, the wave is felt throughout the pattern. Through a slight touch, the vibration is felt throughout the web. So it is in the case of the universe. We are not separate. We only appear separate. Hence, if will is used in the service of the person, it is a wrong kind of will. It leads to more and more misery, conflict and violence.

Right will means will used in the service of God and in renunciation. When that happens, *you* are no more. Right will means that the will gathers itself and commits suicide. But only a man of will is able to do that! People who don't have any will, who are always lukewarm, half-hearted and wavering, cannot surrender.

Surrender needs a certain kind of integrity and resolution. In fact it needs the greatest resolution possible. Unless you are totally in it, it will not happen. Even if you hold back a little bit, it is not surrender. Through that which you are holding back, everything will return again. You will be the same. Surrender must be irrevocable. One must commit oneself so totally that there is no going back, because the bridge will be burned and you will have thrown the ladder away.

Right will is capable of destroying itself. It is a strange phenomenon but that's how life is. It is paradoxical. First we must learn to create an ego, then the ego is made ripe and strong; next we must learn how to drop it. It would seem logical not to develop it at all. Also, the harder the wood, the brighter the fire when it is burnt! If there was never an ego, you would never know the joy and freedom of dropping it. A person who has never been imprisoned has no consciousness about freedom. Being in prison is a prerequisite to know the taste of freedom.

Life is full of contradictions. A poor man never knows he is poor. He looks poor to people who are not poor. He does not know that he is poor and has nothing to compare his poverty with. To be really poor, first you must be rich. After that, you will know the pain and agony of poverty. To be a true beggar, first you must be an emperor. Otherwise you will not know what it is like to be a beggar.

The ego must first be strengthened, only to be dropped later. The so-called strengthening of the ego is actually the process of gathering and focussing our scattered energies into a single ball, which actually enables us to drop it more easily and therefore aids in the process of total surrender. The will first must be sharpened, only to be surrendered later. Knowledge must first be gathered, only to be unlearned later.

On the day you unlearn whatever you have learned, you become a child again. You are then twice born. This is not like the first childhood in which you lacked awareness of being knowledgeable. You now know what it means to be knowledgeable. And in dropping it you feel a great freedom, great joy, such ecstasy, and yet you are not attaining anything.

You were the same in your first childhood, yet you were completely unaware of it. This whole process is needed to make you aware. Awareness comes through a dialectical process. So will is good and right, when you are capable of dropping it. If you cannot drop it, if you cling to it, if it becomes your life-pattern, you miss the whole point. Then it creates misery and hell. Great willpower is needed to create hell or heaven. If you continue in it, it creates hell. If you jump out of it, it creates heaven!

The only evolution worth calling evolution is the evolution of bliss. If bliss does not grow, you do not evolve. If bliss does not grow, society does not evolve. What people generally understand as evolution and progress is sheer nonsense.

A more complicated technology does not mean evolution. You may have more gadgets, bigger machines, better airplanes, better trains and better houses, but you are the same person. You can reach the moon or stars one day, but you will do only whatever you did on earth! If you smoke cigarettes here, you will smoke there also. If you play cards here, you will play cards there also. If you drink beer here, you will carry beer to the moon. What else will you do there?

If mankind remains the same, there is no evolution. We can only bring about a substitute evolution that gives the false appearance that we are evolving. For centuries, mankind has not evolved. Only a few individuals here and there have evolved. We can come across a handful of people such as a Buddha or a Jesus. Those who have tasted the nectar of bliss are evolved human beings.

A small number of people have experienced evolution. Getting down from the trees and walking on two legs instead of all fours does not make us an evolved animal. It merely makes us erect and vertical, that's all.

Real evolution is judged by blissfulness. And blissfulness grows with consciousness. They grow together, simultaneously. They are two aspects of the same coin. You grow in consciousness and you become more blissful or you grow more blissful and become more conscious. Start from anywhere, either consciousness or bliss, and you will grow.

Unless one becomes a Buddha or a Christ, one misses the great opportunity of evolving. All other progress is false. Surrender is an effort in the right direction. It releases our potential, and mankind has infinite potential. Man can reach the ultimate peak of joy in surrender, not in acquisition.

Gaining knowledge is cheap and easy. One can sit in a library and collect knowledge. Our memory is so great that some claim a single man's memory system

can contain all the libraries of the world. No computer has yet been invented which competes with man's memory system. It is almost unlimited and it can create such a great illusion of being wise.

Wisdom is a totally different phenomenon. It comes through love. It grows and flowers in the heart. The ways of the heart are unlike the ways of the head.

Surrender is a search for wisdom. I am not interested in imparting knowledge here. I am not a teacher. A teacher imparts knowledge. A master imparts his being. A master does not teach. On the contrary, he helps you unlearn. He helps you unburden. He helps you to come from the head to the heart. Once you are centered in the heart, your life pulsates with a new energy. That energy is love. It is not that you become more loving. You become love itself.

Surrender is the transformation of ego into love. It is the transformation of your love for yourself into love for all. Yes, you need the ego to start with. When the ego is dropped, surrender happens.

What if some never had an ego to start with? What about those whose identities had already merged with the collective identity? You may say that this cannot happen. You are wrong. It is rare, that is true; but it happens. Incarnations come to earth with full consciousness of their collective identity. They are already in tune with the universe. In the book titled *Nithyananda Vol. 1*, this issue is covered in greater detail.



Extreme Statement

18.17 One who is egoless, whose intelligence is not of attachment, though he may kill, is not the slayer and is never bound by his actions.

A very dangerous statement! Krishna goes to the extreme.

No master except Krishna can make such a courageous statement. Krishna makes a bold statement here. One who is not motivated by ego, whose intelligence is not based on attachment, though he may kill many men in this world, he does not kill, nor is he bound by his actions.

Of course, one who has reached that level of awareness does not think of killing. As long as we have the idea of 'I' and 'mine', we attack or kill. When we exclude, we kill. On the other hand, when we surrender, we learn to include everything.

One thing we need to understand. We kill others only when we feel insecure. We do not need courage to make war. We only need cowardice. Only cowards go to war. They are afraid for themselves and kill others. To kill others, we do not need courage. We simply need cowardice. The person who is courageous never kills others. He is established in non-violence. Only cowards continuously try to hurt others. A courageous person does not try to hurt others. That is the reason Krishna makes this bold statement — one who is not entangled in ego, even if he kills, does not kill.

Krishna emphasizes here: May you be liberated from entanglement. May you liberate yourself from ego. He does not ask Arjuna to kill. One problem is that people give their own meaning to words. They have their own understanding.

A small story:

Once there was a little boy in a Zen monastery training to be a monk. One day, when he was cleaning his master's room he accidentally broke his master's favorite teacup.

He wanted to confess to his master about the teacup, but was scared that he would punish him. He approached the master and asked him, 'Master, isn't it true that everything that was born has to die someday?'

The master replied, 'Yes.'

The boy then showed him the fragments of the broken cup and said, 'It was time for your teacup to die.'

We must know how to present our argument. But here, do not give your own meaning to what Krishna has said! He is asking you to be liberated from ego. The person who has realized that he is part of a whole will not kill even if he kills. Grasp the proper meaning of this. Krishna asks you to experience the truth about yourself. He does not ask you to kill people. Recognize the correct meaning. Krishna inspires you to realize the truth, not to kill.

Another small story:

A Jew, an Italian and a Polish man applied for a position at the police academy. First the Jew was interviewed.

He was asked, 'Who killed Jesus?'

The Jew said, 'The Romans killed Jesus.' He was asked to join duty the next day and was sent out.

Next the Italian entered and was asked the same question. He replied, 'The Jews.' He was asked to report to work the next day.

The Polish man came next and was asked the same question. He replied, 'I do not know.' The officer gave him one day to think about it and to come back with the answer.

The man returned home and his wife asked him, 'What happened during the interview?' The husband replied, 'I got the job. The first day itself I have been given a murder case to solve!'

We can give whatever meaning we want to words. Do not give the wrong meaning to Krishna's words. Krishna asks you to liberate yourself from your ego. He does not ask you to go around killing people. Understand the truth behind the words. Only a master like Krishna can make such a courageous statement.

Krishna uses killing as an extreme example to make Arjuna think. The focus is on non-attachment arising out of egolessness. When one no longer feels the need to survive, anything that one does is without attachment and without expectation. When a person is in that state, he is truly in tune with Existence. If such a person destroys, it is similar to the destruction caused by Nature, which happens at a different frequency and understanding level as I explained earlier.

Krishna makes this statement to drive the point home to Arjuna that it is his duty to stand up and fight instead of running away from the battlefield.

Q: Swamiji, your disciples say that you burn them. This makes us afraid. What does it mean?

Of course, my disciples are right. I don't know in what context they said this, but they should not let out these business secrets!

When you wish to be a gazer, just looking at me and enjoying, I give you brain candy in addition to the eye candy that you take yourself!

When you become serious, when you see meaning behind my words and when you believe that I can help you move forward spiritually, you come closer to the state of a disciple. I start advising you to drop my form and focus on the formless.

When you become a disciple, you become my responsibility. Your spiritual progress is no longer your responsibility alone; it is mine too. I can no longer smile and let you go your way. All spiritual progress is about dropping the ego, and the master's primary job is to remove that ego. It is surgery and the master is the surgeon.

Please understand this clearly. If you stay with me for sometime, you will know that I am not a *śānta svarūpa*, a calm and smiling visage, all the time. My disciples run from place to place while I shout instructions to them. Outsiders are sometimes shocked at the words that I use. 'How can a master say such things?' they wonder. They have not read or understood the Gita, that is why they react like this!

Even when I seem aggressive, that is just the picture I present. Inside me there is no emotion or aggression. There is not even *satva* (goodness). A master is beyond the three *guṇas* - attributes. He is a *triguṇarahita*. He has transcended the three attributes of *satva* (goodness), *rajas* (aggression) and *tamas* (lethargy or inaction).

Yes, my disciples may have told you that I burn them; but I am sure they told you that with pride and love! Otherwise why would they stay with me? I don't force them. They see the change and transformation that happens within them when their ego drops and bliss rises within. Why would they want to stay? Very soon they understand that my shouting, anger and all this burning is superficial, a mask meant for their progress. They understand that compassion drives the surgery.

In fact, I tell them openly, and it is a danger for me, that the only thing that makes me sad is when a disciple leaves me. It does not happen often, but it happens. It does not happen because they are unhappy that I shout, but because the path takes them away from what they think they want. I feel sad because their beings brought them to me after having had the experience of running away in previous bodies. The spirit, the being, hopes that at least in this lifetime it will be redeemed through a master.

There is nothing to fear from me or any master. The master is driven by one thing: compassion for you. He needs nothing in return. There is nothing that you can give him, which is of any value to him. His compassion for you is totally unconditional.



Components Of Action

18.18 Knowledge, the object of the knowledge and the subject of the knowledge, the knower, are the three factors that stimulate action; the senses, the action and the performer comprise the three components of action.

18.19 According to the guṇa theory of Sāṅkhya, there are three types in knowledge, action, and performers of action. Listen as I describe them.

18.20 That knowledge by which the one imperishable reality is seen in all Existence, undivided in the divided, is knowledge in the state of goodness.

18.21 The knowledge by which one sees different realities of various types among all beings as separate from one another, such knowledge is in the mode of aggression.

18.22 The irrational, baseless, and worthless knowledge by which one clings to one single effect as if it is everything; such knowledge is in the mode of darkness or ignorance.

18.23 Obligatory duty performed without likes and dislikes and without selfish motives and attachment to the fruit, is in the mode of goodness.

18.24 Action performed with ego, with selfish motives, and with too much effort, is in the mode of aggression.

18.25 Action that is undertaken because of delusion, disregarding consequences, loss, injury to others, as well as one's own ability, is in the mode of ignorance.

18.26 The performer who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with resolve and enthusiasm, and unperturbed in success or failure is called good.

18.27 The performer who is impassioned, who desires the fruits of work, who is greedy, violent, impure, and affected by joy and sorrow, is called aggressive.

18.28 The performer who is indisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, malicious, lazy, depressed, and procrastinating is called ignorant.

In these verses Krishna explains the nature of man, the human.

Krishna has already said that the final performer is not man, *nara*, but the divine, *Narayana*. Even so the human is still the subject, the medium that we are dealing with. All the frailties that we have are inherent in our nature. These are the *guṇas* or attributes that define our behavior. These attributes control our thoughts, words and actions. One is not all the time, from birth to death, in one *guṇa* or attribute.

The *guṇas* are of three kinds: *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Satva* is defined as calm, peaceful, spiritual and good, etc. This is generally the attribute of spiritually inclined persons. *Rajas* is translated as aggressive, passionate and active, etc. This is the primary attribute of kings, warriors and business people. *Tamas* is lazy, ignorant and passive, etc. *Tamas* is seen as the inactive component that many of us experience at times. It is the active component of those who live to eat and sleep.

In these verses Krishna beautifully defines in detail the qualities and effects of these *guṇas* upon us. His purpose in doing this is to make us aware of what happens within us. Majority of the time we are ignorant of why we react the way we do. As the master explains in these words, and once we understand how we react, we can move to the next level of understanding and shift to a superior attribute.

Yes, all of us must be *rajasic* or aggressive, part of the time to accomplish things. Even so, if we can act aggressively without greed, anger or fear affecting us, as well as acting without attachment, we are in the *satvic* mode, although superficially we seem to be in the *rajasic* mode.

Krishna defines a *satvic* person as one who sees the collective consciousness, the whole, in parts. He understands that he is not alone and not an island, rather he is linked with everyone and everything in this universe. He understands his connection with the cosmic energy.

A *satvic* person is not focused on himself. He realizes that his survival and possessions, the 'I' and 'mine', are meaningless. His activities are selfless, without expectation of praise or reward, and without attachment to the process or result. Such a person is not affected by the seeming success or failure of what he undertakes because there is no feeling of 'I' and 'mine' involved in his actions.

It is not that difficult to move into a *satvic* state. True, you may not be able to stay there all the time, but once you understand how this state liberates you, you try more and more to stay there.

To be in the *satvic* state is to understand that past and future are mere illusions. They do not exist. Past is gone, never to return. Why worry? Future is a mirage. All you can do is activate your present moment. That is all you can do. The present moment determines your future. Once you focus on the present, your awareness increases manifold and you drop expectations and attachment. You just do what is needed. You respond to reality. You respond to the now. You are in *satva*.

You fall into a *rajasic* state when you distinguish between you and I, between this and that. There is no differentiation. Your mind, the ego, creates this differentiation. Your *samskāras* bring up this differentiation between you and others. A *rajasic* person does everything expecting a reward. He is selfish, aggressive and impatient. When he does not get what he wants, he is upset. Failure is a blow to his ego.

A *rajasic* person can never be happy. Please understand, almost all of you are driven by *rajas*. This is the predominant attribute in modern times. Rich or poor, intelligent or foolish, educated or uneducated, almost everyone compares himself with the next person and wants what the other person has. As long as you are driven by your desires, and not satisfied with what you have, you are in *rajas*.

Rajas corrodes you. It eats up your soul. There is no end to greed and no limit to fear. These are the driving forces of *rajas*. *Rajas* is about trying to attain what you don't have, not being happy with what you have, not being happy about where you are and not being happy when you are in the present moment. You are either constantly in the future, imagining what you would like to be and what you would like to have, or you are in the past thinking about how you could have done better. *Rajas* is living in a fantasy world.

In *tamas* one is fully in delusion. One sticks to embedded beliefs, knowledge or conditions without making an effort to verify whether they are right or wrong, appropriate or not, harmful or not. Religious zealots and gangsters are in *tamas*. There is no difference between them; only their objectives are different. Both are dogmatic, violent and totally selfish. They adopt any means, even criminal, to achieve their objectives.

Tamas does not just mean inactivity, laziness and procrastination. Yes, it is all that; however, it also includes mindless action performed without realizing that one

is part of a whole. The ego is so enlarged that it believes it is the whole. It believes nothing else of significance exists; others are of no consequence. A Hitler who destroyed millions of people believing that they were inferior was in deep *tamas*. *Tamas* is an animal at its worst, when it stops heeding the laws of Nature. And only a human can be in *tamas*. An animal can never be in *tamas* because it is directed by the intelligence of Nature.

Q: I am a Nithya Spiritual Healer and I meditate regularly. Along with detachment, I find that I become disinclined to do anything. Then I become afraid that I am falling into laziness. What is happening?

You are on the right path. Do not worry. What is happening is what needs to happen.

Society, in the form of political or religious institutions, tries to control you through fear and greed.

These institutions believe that unless you are prodded by fear and greed, you cannot be effective, productive and valuable. To whom are you productive, effective and valuable? It is certainly not an advantage to your own Self. Perhaps it benefits these institutions.

Fear and greed make you seek in the external world for fulfillment. You seek to act on your thoughts and words. These can never be fulfilled. The same fear and same greed reappear no matter how many times you have experienced them before.

You are in *rajas*, the mode of aggression, when you act on your thoughts. People ask, 'How can I live without acting on my thoughts? Who will pay my bills?'

Please understand that when Nature has provided you with a built-in system that converts bread to blood, can it not take care of providing you with bread as well? Nature does not trust you with anything that is critical to your existence. That is why essential activities such as breathing, growing and digesting, etc. happen without your involvement!

Stop acting on your thoughts. Stop looking for their meaning. Instead seek the source of thoughts. For instance, if you feel hungry, ignore that thought. When your body feels that desperate hunger, it will by itself seek and procure the food to fulfill its needs.

When you do this, when you stop acting on the meaning of words, you fall into *tamas*, into inaction. That is what you fear. There is nothing to fear. You will stay in that inaction until your hatred against your restlessness and greed get worked out. Once that happens, you come out of that inaction, that *tamasic* state, purified.

Please understand, you do not move from *tamas* into *rajas* and then into *satva* as you may think. You do not move from inaction to aggression and then to peace. You start with *rajas*, which is the state of your day-to-day activity, when you are in the mode of doership, seeking to fulfill the meaning of your thoughts and words.

When you stop seeking meaning, you fall into inaction, *tamas*, for a brief period, until you start seeking the source of your thoughts and move into *satva*. You will feel the effect of inner healing and understand that the universe does take care of you.

Your being is always centered. Your mind is always at the periphery.

Your mind constantly seeks the outer and is led by the senses. Your being stays centered at the core and is directed inwards. You are constantly tugged back and forth between the center and the periphery. When you are at the periphery, you are truly mad. You are overcome with fear and greed. You are consumed by lust, the desire for power and wealth.

When you are at the center, you are Shiva. You are in cosmic consciousness.

Over time, you develop the capability to stay somewhere in between. You have no choice. You must choose a state of semi-madness, because your mind will not let you stay at the center. You become eccentric, moving briefly back and forth between the bliss at your core and the illusions at your periphery.

At the periphery your senses control you. They make merry. Once in a while, if you are intelligent, you realize that you are getting nowhere. You go wherever your senses lead you and try to enjoy the sense objects presented to you. Over time the enjoyment decreases. You need more and more of the same pleasure whereas the enjoyment becomes less and less. You are about to become addicted. Some bit of intelligence in you warns you to get out.

You move away from the periphery and try to move towards the center where you have experienced brief moments of great peace and happiness. Your awareness does not last long. Your mind becomes restless and you return to your old ways. You move back towards the periphery.

Please understand that at the peripheral level, you are in the grip of the need to survive and possess. You are governed by ego, or 'I' - the need to survive, and 'mine' - the need to possess. Two strong forces keep you tethered to the periphery: fear of losing your identity and greed to possess more and more.

Your ego reduces when you realize your connection with others and understand that you can collaborate with them more effectively than if you compete. Your need to possess more and more decreases when you develop the awareness to enjoy what you have instead of rushing to acquire more.

As you move from being eccentric towards staying longer at the center, you move from past and future to the present moment. You move from suffering to bliss.



Meanings Of Life

18.29 Now hear Me explain, fully and separately, the threefold division of intellect and resolve, based on modes of material nature, O Arjuna.

18.30 O Arjuna, that intellect is in the mode of goodness that understands the path of work and the path of renunciation, right and wrong action, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation.

18.31 That intellect is in the mode of passion that cannot distinguish between principles of right conduct and wrongdoing, and right and wrong action, O Arjuna.

18.32 That intellect is in the mode of ignorance that accepts unrighteousness as righteousness and thinks everything to be that which it is not, O Arjuna.

18.33 Consistent and continuous determination in controlling mind, breath and senses for uniting with the Divine is goodness, Arjuna.

18.34 Craving for results of action while clinging to goals of proper conduct, pleasure and wealth is the state of passion.

18.35 Ignorant resolve that cannot go beyond dreaming, fear, grief, despair and delusion – such is in darkness, Arjuna.

Here Krishna refers to the approach known as defining the *puruṣārtha* or meanings of life.

Dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa are the four *puruṣārtha*. These can be translated as righteousness, wealth, desire or lust and liberation. These are the four-fold meanings of life. I prefer not to call them the purposes of life. There is no purpose to life. Once we fix a purpose to life, it becomes a goalpost and attachments and expectations result.

Life is a path without a destination. Once we assume there is a destination, we hurry. The future becomes a stress-inducing factor. Let us say we travel from New York to Washington. Once we fix Washington as our destination, the next issue is, 'When will we reach there?' From then on, we are constantly tormented by, 'When will we reach there?' It is a different matter that we may have nothing to do in Washington once we arrive, and therefore there is no need to hurry! In the process we do not enjoy the journey. The journey becomes an irritation that we must cross in order to reach our destination.

In life, do not fix a destination. Each journey must be enjoyed. The path and the journey are what life is. Enjoy the people you meet, the experiences you have and what you pick up on the way, without being greedy to acquire more. The journey, the path, becomes so enjoyable that whatever destination you reach is the right destination.

People who attach a purpose to life are disturbed. Philosophers who have no other work create false purposes to life. Philosophers exist to confuse people whereas mystics solve problems and provide guidance to awaken intelligence. When we let life lead us, when we take life as it comes, we enjoy every moment. We truly live in the present, like a God. We realize our potential.

Puruṣārtha provides four meanings to life:

Dharma is right conduct or virtue. Buddha preached this as the middle path.

Artha is the stuff that we pick up on our path and journey, the material things that we need to sustain ourselves.

Kāma is the pleasure of the senses we experience and enjoy on this journey. These are rightful acquisitions and pleasurable experiences. Do not feel disturbed by the need for these. But do not become caught up in them and forget to move on the path and enjoy the journey to the fullest.

Mokṣa or liberation is the ultimate meaning to life. This is the culmination of the liberation from expectation, desires, greed and fear, and liberation from attachment to desires. This understanding that non-attachment and absence of expectation leads to liberation can fill us with bliss.

Here Krishna gives the essence of how we should lead our lives to make it meaningful. He says that goodness or *satva* is the state in which there is clarity about right and wrong, and whatever we do with our body, mind and senses is done with a view to liberate ourselves from attachment and desires in order to realize that we are divine.

Q: Swamiji, you said earlier that differentiation between right and wrong is only in our minds. Can you explain why Krishna tells us to have clarity about right and wrong?

In purely spiritual terms, in the definition of Existence, there is no differentiation of right and wrong. God does not sit and judge. Nature and God do not keep accounts. An enlightened master is beyond your normal understanding of right and wrong.

However, in day-to-day life, in practical terms, there are social guidelines and limits to what you can and cannot do. You cannot live within a society or even outside a society without following accepted norms of behavior.

Krishna makes recommendations throughout the Gita for everyday practical life, to be in the flow of Existence while simultaneously being in line with societal norms. He does not talk only about people who move to isolated forests to contemplate the infinite. His advice to Arjuna is practical and valid for each of us, whether a student, scholar, householder or businessperson.

Therefore, He speaks about practicality and spirituality. He takes us to Quantum Spirituality. He advises us on how to lead our day-to-day lives while moving up spiritually into Self-realization. For that reason, He advises us to understand right and wrong and to guide our body, mind and senses accordingly, free from attachment and expectations. In this way, we fall in tune with our divine Self.

Another aspect to His advice is born out of His concern for our life beyond. What we do in this life determines what happens after our body perishes. Whatever we do follows us. The intent and result of our action (*karma*) follows us from birth to birth through the transitions of death. Our current mindset (*vāsanā*) carries over to the next birth and recreates us in the same mold. We become what we do, as well as what we think, desire and intend.

That is why enlightened masters, the *ṛṣis*, laid down guidelines. Their guidelines is *dharma*. In its broadest sense, living in *dharma* is living in accordance with one's natural inclinations and aptitudes (*vāsanās* and *karmas*). Since the very purpose of taking this birth is to experience and exhaust these *vāsanās* and *karmas*, following one's *dharma* helps us to quickly exhaust this store and move on spiritually. Following one's *dharma* in the true spirit of liberation, without fear or favor and without desires and expectations makes life worth living. It makes the journey blissful.

If, on the other hand, we do not differentiate between right and wrong, and pursue material pleasures with attachment and expectations, we fall into *rajas* - aggression. This is why businesses often do things that are blatantly antisocial. The pursuit of wealth confuses the minds of top executives that the line between right and wrong becomes blurred.

When we think that the terrible deeds that we do are the best for us and we carry them out with deep emotional attachment to the action and end result, we are in dark ignorance or *tamas*.

We can only transform ourselves first, and by the light of our transformation influence others. Each one must internalize the truth and transform. Otherwise it will be another coercion; it will be another dictatorship in the name of spirituality.

The truth is that we should evolve renouncing our expectations and attachment. When we see so-called wrong events happening around us, we realize, 'Yes, they are bad and should not happen.' We know that we can do little to influence these events. Even so, we know there will be a correction. We will know that Existence may not work like lightning, but there will be a payback. So, we do not become disturbed. We stay still in *satva*.

This does not prevent us from doing whatever we can to set right what has gone wrong. We must do whatever we can. However, we should not think that we are the corrector, if that is the right word. This will entangle us again in ego and attachment. When we have the intelligence to work without ego and attachment, Existence provides us with whatever we need in terms of power, to do what we need to do.

You may ask, how can we determine what is right or wrong? It is a relevant question. In simple terms, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra lays down straightforward guidelines for right living, as the five *yama* or disciplines. Patanjali says these are *satya*, truth; *ahimsā*, non-violence; *aparigraha*, living simply; *asteya*, not coveting what others have; and *brahmacharya*, living in reality. If we use these guidelines for our thoughts, words and actions, we will stay on the right path. I can speak about each of these disciplines for hours; unfortunately there is only limited time here.

In our annual Himalayan trips, those who accompany me do a *vṛāja homa* on the banks of the sacred river Ganga at Rishikesh: they take these five vows of *yama* and wear the sacred thread and saffron cloth that I give them for protection. I do not monitor them to see whether they follow this strictly or not, but they will tell you that these vows make their trip more enjoyable!



Delusion Of Senses

18.36,37 And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, about three kinds of pleasure. The pleasure that one enjoys from spiritual practice results in cessation of all sorrows. The pleasure that appears as poison in the beginning, but is like nectar in the end, comes by the grace of Self-knowledge and is in the mode of goodness.

18.38 Sensual pleasures that appear as nectar in the beginning, but become poison in the end, are in the mode of passion.

18.39 Pleasure that is delusion from beginning to end and born out of sleep, laziness and illusion is said to be of the nature of ignorance.

18.40 No one, either here or among the celestials in the higher planetary systems, is free from these three states of material nature.

Earlier Krishna spoke about the influence of *guṇas* (attributes) on the intellect, that in turn defines the way we act. Now He talks about how we respond as a result of our behavior.

Krishna says that spiritual practice, that is the state of *satva*, is difficult in the beginning, and it is like poison; however, it becomes life-giving nectar in the end. Sensual pleasures born out of *rajas*, on the other hand, seem like nectar in the beginning but become poisonous. In the *tamasic* state, Krishna says, one is deluded as if in sleep, laziness and illusion. Every human is in one state or another. Not merely humans, even the celestials who are supposedly more evolved are in the same mode. No one can escape the effect of the *guṇas*, the attributes of Nature.

How beautifully the master summarizes how we become deluded by our senses! It is not easy to begin spiritual practice. In the *vedic* tradition, in the *gurukul* schools, from a young age children were brought up in an environment of spirituality. They learned to control their mind and senses at an early age and to focus upon Self-

realization. They understood by the example of their masters that there was something more pleasurable than sensory pleasures. This gave them courage.

In today's age, this education system is considered impractical. Invading Moghuls and the colonizing British destroyed the *vedic* culture, especially the *gurukul* tradition. This was not accidental or incidental. It was a deliberate strategy. Aurangzeb ordered his men to convert Hindus to Islam or kill them. He advised that it was better to convert. He knew conversion added another person to his religion, whereas killing only eliminated a Hindu. British rulers identified the educational system of *gurukul* as the key to India's tremendous intelligence, and targeted its destruction so that they could rule.

What we have today is a mass of literate Indians who are uneducated. They are totally unaware of the great tradition of our *vedic* culture. They think rituals are meaningless. Hindu philosophers and scholars, equally ignorant of our culture, encourage this trend. We have lost the knowledge of the connection between these rituals and spirituality. Rituals, when carried out meaningfully, are the basis of spirituality.

We are behind our sensory pleasures now. When we are in the *rajasic* mode, only sensory pleasures of the body matter. In the *tamasic* mode, we don't even know we are in deep ignorance. The sensory organs are powerful. They are our windows to the external world. They are trained to run away from pain and chase pleasure. Bodily pleasure gives mental pleasure and therefore emotional satisfaction. Once we experience the mental pleasure, we constantly rewind and replay that pleasure. Our past drives our future. Attachments and expectations drive our actions.

If you lead your life with awareness, you won't get caught in the illusions of attachment and expectations.

A small story:

A three year old boy asked his aunt who was pregnant, 'Why is your stomach so big?'

She replied, 'I am having a baby.'

The boy was surprised and asked, 'Is it a good baby?'

She replied, 'Oh, yes, it is a real good baby.'

The boy was shocked and asked, 'Then why did you eat him?'

Often in life, we too jump to the wrong conclusions when we are led by our senses! We try to keep on experiencing pain and pleasure alternately. Either way it is only an illusion.

Krishna describes the *tamasic* person with great insight. He does not use the word poison in describing the state of such a person. A *tamasic* person is like a drug addict, He says. At least a *rajasic* person enjoys the experience now, and suffers later. A *tamasic* person has no enjoyment. He suffers without knowing that he is suffering. His delusion is so deep. That is why he passes his suffering on to others with no compunction. That is how ignorant people who rise to become leaders act.

Q: Swamiji, education teaches us that we must think through problems to reach a solution. Yet, you say to stop thinking. What then is the point of education?

Truth can't be reached by thinking. Thinking can help us arrive at a theory, a hypothesis; it cannot know the truth itself. Truth can be known when thinking ceases, when we become absolutely silent and move into a state of utter awareness which is a state of utter thoughtlessness, too. That's why few people arrive at the ultimate Truth.

Many have strived, many have struggled and many have desired. All the same, they were working through the mind. The mind can spin and weave beautiful fictions. It cannot give you that which *is*.

Mind is the stuff dreams are made of. Dreams are different from thoughts. Dreams are pictorial thoughts. Dreaming is a primitive way of thinking. That's the way children think. Children's books must include many pictures and colorful illustrations because children are less interested in text and more interested in pictures.

Slowly, as they grow up, pictures become less and less. By the time they reach their post-graduation in the university, pictures disappear. They move from pictures to words.

Thinking is a more sophisticated and evolved way of dreaming. It is more eccentric, more mathematical and more philosophical. Even so, deep down, it is the same process. Whether you think in pictures or words makes no difference.

Ancient languages like Chinese are written using pictograms. They don't have an alphabet. They are the most ancient languages. They must have been the first languages. They still carry the imprint of the ancient primitive mind.

For example, they say if you want to write 'war' in Chinese, you must make a pictogram: a roof with two women sitting underneath — that means one man and two wives!

Thinking has its own limitations. The greatest limitation is that it can go round and round but it never reaches the center of things. Truth is that which *is*. We cannot fabricate it. We can't think about it. It is already there. We just need to look at it. If we are trying to think about the truth, we have missed it, because we need an unoccupied consciousness.

The whole process of meditation is becoming an unoccupied consciousness. There are no dreams and no thoughts, just a silent awareness. There is nothing to hinder and disturb, nothing to interpret and interfere. Then we see that which *is*. That is *satya*, the ultimate Truth.

Truth is for the courageous. The greatest act of courage is dropping our mind, because we consider it our most precious possession. We don't know anything higher than that. Education teaches us to have more and more refined minds. Education is the process of refining our mental processes. We devote almost one-third of our life to formal education. But that is the most precious time of our life because we will never be that young again. We will never be that innocent again. We will never be that intelligent again. We will never have that much energy and strength again.

The most precious time of life is devoted single-mindedly to a single purpose: refinement of the mind. Then one day, when somebody says 'drop it,' it seems impossible. We have acquired it through great effort, years of training, examinations and all the nightmares that we go through. And then the master says, 'Drop it.'

He says, 'It is all rubbish!'

The purpose of the master is to help us get rid of our own mind. Great courage is needed to drop those twenty-five years and the training and all our degrees, the PhDs and DSCs. Certainly great courage is needed to close that whole chapter. It is the process of becoming innocent again. Losing that grip on intellectual knowledge and losing all that we have learned means we will be in a state of non-knowing again. That is what is required for knowing the truth.

The state of non-knowing is the basic requirement for knowing the truth because only the innocent ones can know it. The knowledgeable ones miss it. The knowledgeable ones keep asking, 'Why?' Those who really seek ask, 'How?'

This is the way of the disciple: not to ask, 'Why?' But this certainly requires courage.

Bliss is possible only through great intelligence. Misery needs no intelligence. Any one is capable of being miserable. That's why there are so many miserable people in the world!

People ask me, 'Why don't we see many blissful people?' The simple reason is that only a few people allow their intelligence to function. The rest prefer to live in ignorance.

Intelligence has always been a problem. If we are intelligent, we are constantly in trouble because unintelligent people surround us. There will be no communication with them. And they are in the majority – we will be alone. They can overpower us. They can force their ideas upon us and make us obey them. They don't allow individuality. The crowd wants us to be part of the crowd. It wants us to surrender our intelligence to it.

Whatever the crowd believes in, it wants us to follow that, whether it is Communism, Christianity, Hinduism or Islam. It wants us to be a believer. Belief is one of the many poisons that kill intelligence. The crowd wants us to become a yes-man to all kinds of nonsense, superstitions and ideas that are meaningless.

For centuries Christianity fought for the belief that the sun revolved around the earth. It killed thousands of people for believing otherwise. Now we look back and wonder how millions of people could have believed such things for hundreds of years.

It was because of fear of the crowd and fear of what violence the crowd was capable of. The crowd wants us to conform. That is the root cause of peoples' intelligence being destroyed. When intelligence is destroyed, we cannot know bliss.

As the child grows up, it is robbed of its natural intelligence. It is educated and conditioned. All kinds of things are forced upon the child. By the time he is a grown man, he has lost his intelligence on the way somewhere. His life becomes miserable.

An ignorant person cannot understand what he is doing, why he is doing it or where he is going. So first he needs to release his imprisoned intelligence. After that, bliss is simple. It is a byproduct. Once we know our intelligence, we immediately feel a showering of bliss.

Yes, there is no point to education if it kills intelligence and bliss. Education that is designed for conformity is useless. It is dangerous. It spoils the spirit.



Rightful Conduct, Not To Perfection

18.41 Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and sūdras are divided in the work they do based on their nature, Arjuna.

18.42 The nature of Brāhmaṇa is characterized by calmness, discipline, austerity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and belief in God.

18.43 Kṣatriya are characterized by their qualities of heroism, vigor, firmness, dexterity, and steadfastness in battle, leadership and generosity.

18.44 Those who are good at cultivation, cattle rearing and trade are known as Vaiśya. Those who are very good in service are classified as Sūdra.

18.45 One can attain the highest perfection by devotion to one's natural work. Listen to Me about how one attains perfection while engaged in one's natural work.

18.46 One attains perfection by worshipping the supreme Being, from whom all beings originate and by whom this entire universe is pervaded, through performance of one's natural duty for Him.

18.47 It is better to engage in one's rightful conduct, even though one may not perform it to perfection, rather than to accept another's conduct and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature are never affected by sinful reactions.

18.48 Every work has some defect, just as fire is covered by smoke. One should not give up the work that is born of his own nature, even if such work is full of fault, Arjuna.

'Śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt,' says Krishna.

So-called scholars have interpreted this verse in a very inappropriate way compared to the other verses of the Gita. The uneducated have also used this verse in order to condemn the *vedic* culture.

Some have used it to justify the Hindu caste system. Others have denigrated the Gita and Krishna by saying, 'How can He be God? How can this be God's scripture when He condones such a social system as the caste system?'

First of all, one must understand how the caste system originated, as well as realize how it became corrupted. In the *vedic* culture, under the *gurukul* tradition, young children were left in the care of the master. Most great masters were married and also had children of their own. This is how Arjuna grew up with Ashwattama, Drona's son.

All the children were taught the *Gayatri mantra* at the age of seven to awaken their inner intelligence. All the children were trained the same way until age fourteen or so. Then the master decided what they should be trained in next, depending upon their spiritual progress and whether they had had any spiritual experiences by then.

The master studied the child and his progress. He also used astrology as a guide to each child's character and aptitude. In this way, the master was able to separate the children into potential scholars, leaders, traders and workers. He then trained them accordingly. No preference was given based on heredity for this selection and training. Of course, it is possible that a scholar's child had a better chance of becoming a scholar due to his genes and liking, but this was not a limiting condition. Were this to be so, Drona, a *brāhmaṇa*, would never have become a warrior.

Scholars were selected based upon their aptitude to learn, their belief in God, knowledge and their *satvic* nature. They were taught the scriptures and they became the *brāhmaṇa*. Those who exhibited courage and leadership qualities were taught martial arts and became *kṣatriya*. Those who showed a preference for farming or business were trained in those fields as *kṣatriya*. Those who were ready to serve others and showed an aptitude to work with their hands were classified as *sūdra*.

No caste was considered inferior or superior to another. No caste was hereditary. The selection and training was scientific and done impartially. It served society well since everyone was living and expressing themselves according to their aptitudes and their unique path towards liberation.

This is why Krishna says it is better to do one's assigned work imperfectly rather than do another's work perfectly. It is possible that one can perform elements of another's work well. A *brāhmaṇa*, being a scholar, may excel as a *vaiśya* in commercial calculations; however, he will have neither the heart nor the head to be a businessman.

This system also allowed a child to select. It was not a one-way selection by the master alone. The child was taken into confidence and became a partner in the selection process. After all, the child's life was being structured. The child could express its passion and decide.

Especially in India, many children today are unhappy because they must study what their fathers want them to study, not what they wish to study. It is the job of the parent to explain various options to the child, assess the child's aptitude and then help him decide the field of study and training. Instead the father says, 'Become an engineer because that fetches the maximum dowry in the marriage market, or because that is what I wanted to study and couldn't study!'

Over time, this classification of selection and training became corrupted. Those who were *brāhmaṇa* wanted their children to be *brāhmaṇa* and so on. People used their influence to bend the system. The *varṇa* or caste system that had originally been a selection and training system in education led to the stratification of society based upon birth.

Before we condemn the caste system, realize that every society has stratification. Wherever equality has been forced on society, as in Communism, it has been a failure. Each person is unique and when similar people form groups, there will be stratification and classification. In *vedic* India this classification was based upon talents and intelligence. In modern society it is based on money and power. Which is better?

Without this caste system, without the *brāhmaṇa* being the keepers of knowledge, our *vedic* treasures would have disappeared thousands of years ago. Do you know that there is a group of scholars in Chidambaram even today, and similarly in other places, who take their traditional job of preserving *vedic* wisdom so seriously that they will not travel out of their town limits? They have made this sacrifice for generations and for thousands of years so that this knowledge could be preserved for posterity. Who will spend his life staying within a ten-mile radius to guard the wisdom that was revealed many thousands of years ago? They do not benefit from this. No one pays them. What do we do in gratitude? We make fun of them, revile them and denounce the system.

The people who denounce the system do it for power and money, not for any selfless reasons. They recommend no alternative means of preserving traditional knowledge.

I am not a *brāhmaṇa*. *Brāhmaṇas* have come to me and hinted at their discomfort at being termed *brāhmaṇas*. They are well-educated people. I tell them, 'Be proud of your culture, your tradition. Without *brāhmaṇas*, the *vedic* tradition would have died long ago.'

This praise is for those *brāhmaṇas* who have remained true to their scholarship. Those who have succumbed to the lure of wealth have no right to be called *brāhmaṇas*.

This is where the *varṇa* system has failed. From a scientific and efficient work system, it has deteriorated into a power broking system. We need to fix that. Actually, today a *brāhmaṇa* gains nothing by calling himself a *brāhmaṇa*. Those who are true to their tradition are poor and disrespected. Only those who use their scholarly skills to become *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* have gained power, money and respect. It is better they continue to be where they are respected and happy!

The problem with society and the societal structure is that they become exclusive; good societies should be inclusive. Today in the West as well as in other places including India, if we have money or power, we are respected. Does anyone rebel against that? No! How can we call a society advanced or progressive when its main criterion for respect is money?

By that logic, I would have been denounced had I been born in any country other than India. For nearly ten years I was homeless! For nine years I traveled the length and breadth of India without carrying money. I never bought train tickets and never paid for meals or lodging. People welcomed me and offered me transport, shelter and food. In the West I would have been locked up in a jail or a shelter!

There is no violence in the Indian system. There is no desperation to reach some place. By comparison, when you see a homeless person approaching your car in the USA, you instinctively raise your windows and lock your doors. You are so afraid. In India, is anyone afraid of a beggar coming and standing in front of them? You may shoo them off, but you are not afraid that they will become violent. Why? There is acceptance. People in the West say that acceptance is weakness, not violence. How strange societal values have become! You respect a person only when you are afraid of him.

We cannot evolve unless there is a fundamental change in our thinking. We have come to a stage where negative qualities are the hallmark of respectability. Jesus said, 'The meek shall inherit the earth,' not the aggressive or violent people. That is true. Violence and aggression never win. Acceptance and compassion do.

Q: Krishna says surrender is the route to enlightenment, to reach Him. But doesn't surrender and renunciation mean surrender of the desire to be enlightened as well?

A beautiful question!

Ananda was one of the most significant of Buddha's disciples, one of the most intimate and closest disciples. For forty-two years he served Buddha like a shadow. Nobody has served a master in that way for so long. He served Buddha as if he were absolutely absent. Nobody felt his presence: he moved silently. He did the work silently. By serving Buddha, he became more and more silent and peaceful. He became more and more graceful. Ananda became imbued with Buddha's spirit by being in that close, intimate relationship and remaining constantly under his energy, in his Buddhafield. He completely forgot about himself. He even forgot that he had to become enlightened.

Buddha reminded him again and again, 'Ananda, it is good to serve the master. I am immensely pleased with you, but don't forget that you must become enlightened.'

Ananda would laugh and say, 'To serve you is enough. Who cares about enlightenment?'

Ananda became enlightened when Buddha died. He became enlightened within twenty-four hours. His sacrifice was immense. Ananda's self-sacrifice is so rare; there is no record of anyone else in the whole history of humanity sacrificing his own enlightenment.

In fact, many times Ananda said to Buddha, 'Please don't insist on my enlightenment. When you order something, I *must* do it and this is one thing that I cannot do because you will send me away if I become enlightened. You will tell me to go to the masses, help others become awakened and spread your message. So let me remain ignorant and continue serving you. Enlightenment can happen later. What is the hurry? I am completely content just being with you.'

Many times Ananda had seen Buddha send a disciple away as soon as he became enlightened, when he was ready to become the vehicle and carry the message. Buddha would say, 'Now, you are ready; go to the farthest corner of the world to help people who are fast asleep. Wake them up!'

Every night before going to sleep, Ananda would pray so that Buddha heard his prayer: 'My lord, help me remain unenlightened because I don't want to go away from you.'

Before Buddha died, he declared, 'Today is my last day.' Ananda began to cry. Buddha said, 'Don't cry and weep, Ananda. Only my death can make you enlightened. Otherwise, you will never become enlightened. When I am gone, there will be nothing left for you to cling to. I am grateful you have served me so long.'

As Buddha predicted, within twenty four hours Ananda became enlightened. Ananda closed his eyes the moment Buddha died and didn't open them until he became enlightened. People asked him, 'Why don't you open your eyes?'

He said, 'I have seen the most beautiful man in the world. What is left to see? Now I can afford enlightenment. My only attachment was to Buddha. That too has been broken.'

Ananda said, 'Maybe he has died only to help me become enlightened.'

This is a beautiful story of a master and disciple. This is the story of a rare one who renounced enlightenment out of gratitude for his master.

Bliss is a by-product of becoming totally conscious. Enlightenment is another name for total consciousness. It simply means becoming full of light.

Light represents awareness and darkness represents unawareness. Ordinarily, we are like a dark night. Everything is dark inside and it has been that way for many lives. The sun has not yet risen there. Outside there is much light. Inside there is only darkness.

That's why very few people venture inwards. They fear the darkness. They don't realize why they should go into the dark tunnel of their being. Why should they bother doing that? They listen to the Buddhas saying, 'Go within,' 'Know thyself,' but they feel puzzled and confused because whenever *they* look within, they don't find anything resembling what the masters or Buddhas talk about.

The Buddhas say, 'Inside you will find light,' but they find darkness. The Buddhas say, 'Inside you will find immortality.' Instead, they find themselves

surrounded by death. Inside there seems to be no life, only death. In darkness they can feel death becoming almost tangible. The Buddhas say, 'Inside you will find bliss,' but they find suffering and nightmares.

There does not seem to be any silence. All is turmoil and chaos. That's why throughout the ages and across all the cultures, people have concluded, 'The Buddhas of the world belong to a different category. Perhaps they were able to find light inside because they are not human. Maybe they are divine.' Not so, we are all ordinary beings.

It is impossible to deny that the Buddhas are speaking the truth, because we can feel what they say in our own lives. People who have seen Jesus, Gautama Buddha, Zarathustra and Lao Tzu have seen their bliss and luminosity. They have heard their songs. It is impossible to deny their truth.

People witnessed the compassion and love of Jesus even towards the crowd that was intent on killing him. Jesus prayed, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' He asked that they be forgiven because they were unconscious. What they were doing was expected. What else could they do? They were driven by their unconscious impulses, the fear and greed that controlled them.

The last words of Jesus are a prayer to God that his tormentors should be forgiven. He prayed that they should not be punished because it was unfair to punish unconscious people. They were not responsible for their actions.

Since it is impossible to deny the Buddhas, people logically create a separate category for enlightened people. They say, 'We are seeds and He is a rosebud. How can we grow into roses? We are merely seeds. We can bow down to the roses. We can respect the roses but we cannot expect to become roses.'

This is the logic people use to console themselves and accept that this division is natural. This is *not* natural. This whole division is absolutely ridiculous. They belong to us; they have been as ordinary as we are. One day they were ordinary and then another day they became extraordinary. Something happened and that something can happen to everyone. They were ordinary when they were just seeds. When they became aware of their potential, when they started transforming their potential into actuality, they became luminous beings. They appeared to come from the beyond. They became a bridge between this world and that, between this shore and the farther shore. Everyone is entitled to the same. Everyone carries a seed of Buddhahood within himself.

Never for a moment think that there are categories. Yes, there is a difference because they are awakened. However, this is simply the difference between somebody who is asleep and somebody who is awakened. And the one who is asleep can wake up. The phenomenon of sleep proves that he has the capacity to come out of it.

Unless one can become awake, one cannot fall asleep either. These are two sides of the same coin. Becoming spiritual means that we recognize the potential in us. We are pouring our attention and efforts into the search for our inner treasure. Right now we may find darkness but if we keep searching, we soon stumble upon an infinite source of light.

So what if there is darkness? What if enlightenment is endarkenment? Who decides when you are enlightened or endarkened? In Sanskrit the word used to describe the Buddha state is beautiful. It is *samādhī*. It means 'to return to the original state.' It does not mean Light.

We have the wrong notion about darkness. The idea that darkness is evil has been brought forward from the Old Testament times. Darkness is energy, just as light is energy. The entire outer space is darkness. It is pure energy. When we differentiate between light as good and darkness as bad, we have problems reaching inside.

As we reach inside, we initially find thoughts, fantasies, dreams and memories. Nevertheless, if we continue digging, they disappear. Ultimately, pure consciousness remains. In that moment one becomes a Buddha. We turn into the consciousness of enlightenment and bliss starts to shower on us.

Right now, we are as unaware as someone standing on his head. It is possible to stand on our head, but our head is not made to do that. That's how people become upside-down. Their whole life becomes upside-down. They do things they should not do while they do not do things that they should do.

They are interested in things that are futile and meaningless; at the same time, they are absolutely uninterested in anything really significant. People live accidentally. They don't have any sense of direction. They don't have an inner discipline for growth. Besides that, they don't have a specific target. They simply go on living, not even knowing why. Maybe they go on doing this and that because they are restless. Restlessness needs some kind of occupation. Any kind of occupation will do. But any kind of occupation does not help us grow. Growth requires a selective life. Otherwise we don't grow; we die.

Each moment we become less and less and less. Each moment we die a little bit more. Death comes closer with every moment. Time is not something to be killed; time is something to be used. Time is a great opportunity. It must not be wasted. But if we observe people, we will be surprised: 99.9% waste their time because they have never given a second thought to what they are doing and why. Others may do it so they just imitate. People are nearly living the life of sleepwalkers.

This is like the two drunkards who are sitting in a car and going nearly over the speed limit. One drunkard says to the other, 'Now at the next cross-road, turn left and then turn right.' The other drunkard replies, 'Why do you keep telling me these things, *you* are the one who is driving!'

The majority of the people live their lives no differently. Nobody is conscious. They neither know who is driving nor who is being driven. In addition, they all go in a certain direction without knowing why. Why is everybody interested in money? It is because all others are interested. Why is everybody interested in fame? Simply because everyone else is interested. And we must be in tune with the others because they surround us.

An intelligent person moves consciously moment to moment. He does everything for a specific reason. He has an intrinsic value system. He lives according to an inner discipline based upon his own awareness and not based upon what is imposed on him by others.

In the beginning we may be groping, but soon we become more and more clear. We go astray less and less. Things settle down and we start following the right path towards inner growth. And then it becomes clear to us: As we move closer to our nature, as things are less chaotic and our life becomes more harmonious, we feel more bliss and peace. That is a clear-cut indication that we are on the right track.

If we feel miserable in life that means we are going astray. Misery is an indicator, but so is bliss. They are *real* indicators. If people are miserable, that shows they are upside-down; if they are blissful, they have formed into an organic unity. They are no more a crowd of diverse impulses and ideas. They are an integral whole. They now have a center. They are rooted and grounded.

The bliss starts happening naturally and simply. It does not come from anywhere else; it arises out of our own inner being of its own accord. It is like a beautiful car's engine humming. An alert driver knows when something goes wrong with his car; he becomes aware because the engine no longer hums the same way. He detects a disturbing note.

Nobody else riding in the car will be aware, even so, the driver becomes alert: something is wrong, something is not functioning well, something is not in tune.

Similarly, a conscious person immediately knows that something has gone wrong and he puts it right. Ordinarily people are not aware at all. They keep thinking that others are responsible for their misery. That is simply the mind's strategy for remaining unconscious. Then what do they do? The unconscious person says, 'My wife makes me miserable. My children make me miserable. My neighbors make me miserable.'

We continue throwing the responsibility onto somebody else. We ourselves must take responsibility. We must become conscious. Bliss is a gift of nature for those who live consciously. It can be given only to people who live consciously because they can appreciate and understand it. It cannot be given to fools. They will throw it away. We can't give precious diamonds to children. They cannot distinguish between precious diamonds and colored stones. To understand a precious stone, we need a jeweler.

As we become more and more conscious, we understand the great gift of bliss that nature always has ready for us. Whenever we are ripe, whenever we are ready, it is ours.



Instructions For Enlightenment

18.49 One whose mind is always free from selfish attachment, who has controlled the mind and who is free from desires, who attains perfection of freedom from selfish attachment to the fruits of work, is one who has renounced.

18.50 Understand from Me how one can achieve the state of Truth, Brahman, by acting in the way I shall now summarize, Arjuna.

18.51,52,53 Endowed with purified intellect; subduing the mind with firm resolve; turning away from objects of the senses; giving up likes and dislikes; living in solitude; eating lightly; controlling the mind, speech, and organs of action; being ever absorbed in meditation; taking refuge in detachment, and relinquishing egotism, violence, pride, lust, anger, and proprietorship, one becomes peaceful, free from the notion of 'I' and 'mine', and fit for attaining oneness with the supreme Being.

These verses are the ultimate *sūtra*, the technique to liberate oneself and realize *Brahman*, ultimate Truth. Krishna describes how to reach the ultimate Truth. He tells us to just follow His instructions.

The beauty of Krishna's advice in Bhagavad Gita is that there are no half measures. He makes no assumptions. He goes to the depths of Arjuna's stated and unstated doubts and tells him in such clear words that there can be no ambiguity.

Bhagavad Gita is primarily a *śāstra*, a scripture that provides knowledge. Even though the author who delivers it is the Divine Himself, He must bring Himself down to the level of Arjuna, a mortal.

Arjuna is full of questions, and so are all of you. Questions are born out of ignorance and never out of wisdom. Questions can never be answered. They raise more questions when they are answered. People keep asking questions without

understanding what is being said. They don't listen. Arjuna is no different. That is why Krishna repeats the same words and concepts to answer the same question. His compassion drives Him to ensure that Arjuna understands.

As long as we question why, we never get a clear answer. Especially with Existence, the question 'Why?' has no relevance. As I said earlier, we operate at a different frequency from the Divine, so even if it is explained, we will not understand. Why do people die? Why do earthquakes and tornadoes kill so many people? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do good things happen to bad people?

There can be no answers to these questions. Spirituality is an inner science, not an outer science - and that is fortunate! In the outer sciences, we keep asking 'Why?' and when we cannot get answers, we get stuck. Then, we produce half-baked theories that convince no one. What does the Big Bang Theory of creation mean, when it doesn't answer the question of what happened before the Big Bang?

Spirituality does not concern itself with 'Why?' It is about 'How?'. 'Why?' is about logic. 'How?' is about realism. *Sāstras* answer the 'Why?' *Sūtras* answer the 'How?' Once in a while, the master delivers the *sūtra* amidst the *śāstra* that He must deliver to keep Arjuna quiet. Here He explains step-by-step how to be liberated so that there can be no doubt at all.

He says, 'Settle the mind and control the senses.' Can you do that while sitting in the middle of a traffic junction? No. That is why He says go into solitude and cut yourself off from disturbances. Eat little, so that you are not disturbed. Go into meditation and shut your senses to external objects.

These are the clearest instructions on how to meditate. Prepare yourself to be away from potential disturbances. There is no point in meditating when you are sure the phone will ring or a guest will be arriving. You are only wasting time. Fix a time and place when you will be alone and undisturbed.

There are simple ways to reduce sensory disturbances. Closing the eyes is insufficient. Your eyeballs will still move and an inner television will still play. Mentally freeze your eyeballs. Think they are made of stone and still them. At the same time place your tongue on your upper palate and lock it. If there is movement of the tongue, that creates verbalization, then visualization is difficult. These two tools of mentally freezing your eyeball movement and locking your tongue substantially reduce the wandering of the mind due to sensory disturbances.

Meditate on an empty stomach. A full stomach makes us sleepy; it will not take us into realization. Ideally one should meditate in the same location regularly to preserve the energy raised in meditation.

These are the physical requirements. Next Krishna repeats what He has been emphasizing all along.

Drop your personality, He says, drop your ego, your attachments, your ideas of 'I' and 'mine' as well as the emotions that bind you to survival and possession. Then you will be liberated and ready to reach the supreme Being.

Q: Swamiji, Krishna says to drop attachments and that is the only way. How is this possible?

Good question. This is why Krishna earlier said that moving into *satva* is like poison in the beginning and like nectar in the end!

The entire message of Gita is about renunciation. It is not renunciation in terms of giving up worldly life and moving into a forest or mountain retreat. It is about staying with the commitments you have undertaken and your assigned duties, while executing them without the feeling that you are executing them.

What is the purpose of this? The moment you are engrossed in the feeling that you are doing the job, the feeling that it is 'your' job, you become emotionally attached to the success or failure of what you are doing. Modern management techniques may claim that this is necessary or that passion is needed to execute your duty. They are wrong. Yes, you need passion and commitment, no doubt, but there is no need for the sort of emotional involvement that makes you depressed if the results are not what you expected.

'Yes, but I am happy if the results are what I want,' you say. But how long are you happy? Human nature is such that you are never satisfied with one thing for long. You move in greed from one desire to another. Even with a simple understanding of the law of probability, you can see that half the time you will fail and be in sorrow. You will bounce back and forth between sorrow and happiness, like a roller coaster ride.

You have asked, 'How can I be unemotional? How can I be detached?' These emotions - happiness and sorrow, irritation and excitement, violence and fear -

happen when you set goals and expectations and link your future to them. You feel that only if things happen the way you want, your future is secure; otherwise you feel your future is in jeopardy. How many of these life and death situations do you face daily, weekly or monthly? It is unlikely that we face such situations, where our life depends on what we do, more than a few times in our entire life.

The rest is pure imagination. You build fantasies and feel that unless these fantasies are realized, you will not be happy. Then it goes without saying: you will not be happy. That is why most of you are unhappy. You simply build fantasies that have no connection with real life.

First, renounce these fantasies about things you do not have. Renounce what you do not have. Live with what you have and enjoy that. We can all do this. It is perfectly possible to achieve this, is it not? There is nothing superhuman in accomplishing this, is there? You simply need to reduce your greed. Make an effort to appreciate what you already have. Make a list of everything you have, including your physical and mental faculties; then give gratitude to the Almighty for having been so compassionate towards you. All of you can see and hear, is it not? Millions of people in this world cannot see or hear. You are not one of them. Has it ever occurred to you that you are special and that you should be grateful to Existence?

Once you get into this mode of being happy with what you basically need and have, which is the discipline of *aparigraha* laid down by Patanjali for simple living, you settle down into a mood of non-expectation. You enjoy the present instead of craving for the future.

You are a renouncer by nature. In order to have one thought, you must renounce the previous thought. It is impossible to have two thoughts at the same time. When you decide to stand, you renounce the thought and the action of sitting. A cell inside your body dies and another is born. Constant renunciation goes on within you physically, mentally and emotionally. You are not aware, that is all.

When you move into the present moment, you renounce the past and future. Focus on the present, and what you need to do now, without worrying about what should happen. Let what happens happen. Do what you need to do. Focus on the path, not on the destination. The Japanese revolutionized the technology of manufacturing with this simple principle. The Six Sigma Principle that produces defect-free material arose out of the philosophy of focusing on the process, the path, instead of on the product or the destination.

When you focus on the path, you begin to enjoy the journey. The path itself has no goals fixed to it for you to achieve. So, there is no attachment. The requirement is only that you travel that path. Wherever you reach will be the right destination.

Live life the way it is served to you. Enjoy whatever happens. Remain in the understanding that the universe is always compassionate to you. Whatever happens is for our good. Whether we realize it or not at that moment, it is good for us. This is surrender. This is renunciation. When this renunciation happens, when you trust that whatever happens is for your good, the universe smiles on you. Bliss descends on you!



You Are Not The Master Of Your Destiny

18.54 Absorbed in the Supreme Being, the serene one neither grieves nor desires. Becoming impartial to all beings, one obtains the highest devotional love for Me.

18.55 By devotion one truly understands what and who I am in essence. Having known Me in essence, one immediately merges with Me.

18.56 My devotee, occupied with everyday life, still remains under My protection, the imperishable ultimate abode, through My mercy, through devotion to Me.

18.57 While being engaged in activities, just depend upon Me, and being fully conscious of Me, work always under My protection.

18.58 When your mind becomes fixed on Me, you shall overcome all difficulties by My grace. But if you do not listen to Me due to ego, you shall perish.

Krishna explains how devotion is reached and how He protects the devotee.

Developing the state of non-attachment, being impartial to all beings, being unconcerned by success and failure, fully absorbed in Godhood, one becomes His devotee. In that state alone does one understand the essence of Krishna. Once one understands this, one merges into Krishna consciousness. When one is in Krishna consciousness, the devotee, even if he is engaged in worldly activities, is protected by the grace and compassion of Krishna. Without any difficulty such a devotee reaches the ultimate reality.

Recently I expressed this concept to some devotees. When we relax from the instinct that constantly works to protect us, the space created allows the power of coincidence to happen. Krishna says that even though we may be engaged in the activities of the world, if we are His devotees, under His protection we experience

eternal consciousness. If Krishna only wanted to give us the spiritual experience, He would not have used the word 'protection.' So Krishna is referring to both the outer and inner worlds. The person who surrenders gets the best experience in both worlds. We simply need to get out and He will get in. Just get out and let Him get in.

A small story:

One day Vishnu was resting on Adishesha, His bed that is actually a big serpent. Lakshmi, His consort, was pressing His feet. This is known as *pādaseva* - service to the feet. In those days women actually served their husbands! Suddenly Vishnu called for His vehicle, Garuda. He stood up, ran a few steps, stopped and then walked back. Lakshmi was puzzled and asked what had happened. Vishnu explained that He had seen a man throwing stones at one of His devotees who was meditating. He jumped up, intending to protect him. However, He saw the devotee open his eyes and pick up a stone to defend himself. When Vishnu saw that the man could protect himself, He decided not to go!

Thus, when you protect yourself and your property, He withdraws. To protect does not mean that you should not lock your house. It means that you should drop the instinct of survival. The instinct of survival constantly tortures you. It is the greatest killer. If somebody kills you, you can only be killed once. But the instinct to survive kills you every moment. When you surrender this instinct, Krishna will protect you. Intellectually you cannot understand this. You think, 'How can somebody who made a statement thousands of years ago give me protection?' You think that only you can protect and look out for yourself. You are wrong!

You think that the survival instinct is essential in order to exist. You will realise the futility of the survival instinct only when you surrender. After that, you will automatically realize that you can live without the instinct to survive or the instinct to possess. You will realize that you can live in the material world without these instincts ruling you. This is what Krishna means when He says that He will protect you. His energy takes care. When you surrender, a space is created that allows the power of coincidence to happen. Automatically things fall into place. Automatically you are taken care of by the energy of Krishna.

When you believe that you are intelligent enough to use your mind and go your own way, you are asking for trouble. Krishna says you will perish if you follow your mind and senses instead of listening to Him.

We must understand two things. The first is about listening to one's mind and the second is about not listening to the master.

Many people have an issue about accepting another human as superior, as someone to whom they should defer, let alone surrender. They think that prostrating at another person's feet is disrespecting themselves and quite uncivilized.

When I heal someone, if the pain is in the leg, I normally bend down and touch the person's feet. Once someone asked me, '*Swamiji*, how you can touch someone's feet? You are lowering yourself.'

I said, 'When I touch someone's feet, I am raising them to my level. When they fall at my feet, you surrender your ego!'

When you fall at someone's feet, you surrender your ego. It is good for you. It does not matter to whom you surrender. Whether you surrender to a stone or a human being, surrendering your ego raises you spiritually. This is the absolute Truth. You do not need to discriminate, search, filter and go through a lot of effort and time to surrender to an enlightened master.

Someone asked me, 'What do you mean by surrender?' Surrender is when you find someone whom you can unconditionally love and you have no problem if it is obvious that you are in love with that person. Your identity then merges with that person.

I tell them, 'Think of the person whom you would like to be with if God told you that the entire earth is about to be destroyed. Only you and one other person will survive and you can choose that person. Who will that person be? That person is the one you have surrendered to!'

Vedic chants end with the word *namaḥ*. What does this mean? It means 'I surrender to You.' Each time you utter a *vedic* prayer, you say, 'I surrender to You, my Lord.' Is there another system of prayer that so thoroughly destroys your ego?

So, just because you do not surrender to a master or a favorite deity, because one is human and the other is stone, do you think you are the master, free and independent? You surrender to someone else for money, power or lust. One of these will surely happen. People run after someone because that person carries something that they want.

How much more sensible it is to follow and surrender to someone out of intelligence, because that person is more aware and can guide you on the path to awareness?

Why are we reluctant to surrender to another person? It is because we have been captured by our mind and senses. We are in a jail and we are captive. We fear losing the identity that our mind and senses have created for us. We fear letting go of that identity. Our mind fights against shifting our allegiance from that ego and identity to someone else.

Realize that you are a slave to your senses and not the master of your destiny as you imagine. Be aware that your pains and sorrows arise from the mistaken belief that you are the master of your destiny. Once you realize this, you will look for an alternative.

You then understand what the greatest master of all says: If you listen to Me, I shall protect you, whatever may happen. If you do not, and you follow your mind, you shall perish.

Q: Swamiji, Krishna says that 'having known Me in essence, one merges in Me' and refers to this as devotion. How can knowledge (jñāna) be devotion (bhakti)?

Please understand that *bhakti* and *jñāna* are not separate. Where there is devotion, there is knowledge and where there is true knowledge, there is devotion.

Krishna does not refer to dry intellectual knowledge, even if such knowledge is of the scriptures. Thousands of scholars and philosophers waste their time and everybody else's time by analyzing Bhagavad Gita word by word and comparing it with other scriptures. What is the point? This is a pointless, foolish exercise that serves only to boost one's ego.

The entire purpose of Gita is to help you drop the ego!

All you need to do is understand one verse of Gita, one statement of Krishna, in its entirety. That is enough to enlighten you. This is what Vivekananda meant when he said that the study of one handful of earth can teach you about the entire earth. You need depth, not breadth of knowledge.

Every word of Gita, every word of Krishna, is energy. That is the knowledge that you need to imbibe. That is the energy that you need to experience. This is what the 'knowing' Krishna refers to. Once you 'know' this energy, you reach this energy. You become Krishna. You are not only devoted to Krishna, you become Krishna.

There are two paths. One way is to 'know' the truth so clearly that there is absolutely no doubt about your trust in the master. There is no doubt that you are the same consciousness as the master. Once you know this, there is no duality. You and the master are the same. This is the height of devotion.

The other way is the deep surrender that happens within, the unbridled love that arises within you and through which you merge with the master. Along with the merger, comes the knowledge that you are no different. Seemingly, knowledge comes from devotion.

The truth is that both happen simultaneously. Do you think Meera did not know that she was one with Krishna? Do you think she could have drunk poison without knowing that whatever she consumed was being consumed by her Lord and master, Krishna?

Do you feel Shankara was just a dry philosopher when he beheld the form of Devi and sang the verses of *Soundarya Lahiri*? He was possibly the greatest philosopher the world has ever seen, and he melted in front of Her in devotion.

All this talk about the three approaches to Divinity as *dvaita* (duality), *viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified duality) and *advaita* (non-duality) are best left to philosophers to argue about.

Duality happens when you are open to that cosmic energy but you still feel separate. You are like the ocean drop that knows it is part of the ocean but sees itself as separate.

To reach this stage, you need to be open. When you are closed, you do not even accept that there is this huge ocean of which you are a part. You are ignorant. Duality or *dvaita* is the first step.

Next, you become available. Not only do you know that there is this huge energy around you, but you become aware that you are part of it. You are a part of the Whole. You realize that as a drop, you are a part of the ocean. This is qualified duality, *viśiṣṭādvaita*.

Then you suddenly realize and know that you are the ocean. There is no difference or barrier between you and the energy. You *are* the energy. You *are* God. This is non-duality, *advaita*. You just are. From being open, to being available, you just *are*.

When you 'know' Krishna, there is nothing else to know. Then, you become Krishna.



Sam̐skāras Drive You

18.59 If due to ego you think: 'I shall not fight,' your resolve is useless, and your own nature will compel you.

18.60 O Arjuna, you are controlled by your own natural conditioning. Therefore you shall do, even against your will, what out of delusion you wish not to do.

18.61 The supreme Lord resides in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the activities of all living entities, that are acting as machines under His illusive material power.

Krishna delivers an ultimatum to Arjuna.

‘Whether you like it or not, Arjuna,’ He says, ‘you will fight. In seeming intelligence, your ego tells you that you should not fight. You are under the illusion of your superficial knowledge that it is not right to wage war against friends, relatives and teachers. But you forget that your nature and your conditioning as a warrior drive you. You are a puppet in the hands of Existence. You will fight.’

These are extraordinary words. Whether we like it or not, whatever our intelligence may be, and whatever our will may be, Krishna says we will be driven by our *sam̐skāras*. The Divine power drives the machine that is the *karmic* cycle. There is no escape.

Nothing can be clearer. The law of nature drives us to fulfill our unfulfilled desires. Our past conditioning invokes these desires. Even though they may be in our unconscious, inaccessible to us, they determine what we do. The master sees this even if we cannot. That is why Krishna makes this bold statement.

Q: So far Krishna has said, surrender to Me and I shall take care. Now He says you have no escape from past conditioning. It makes me feel hopeless!

A wonderful doubt! Krishna has been talking to Arjuna throughout these eighteen chapters to give you hope!

Yes, *saṁskāras* drive you. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad clearly states: as are your desires, so are your thoughts. As are your thoughts, so is your will. As is your will, so are your actions. As are your actions, so you become.

It all starts with your mind. The mind creates desires. The mind creates and stores the *saṁskāras*. You can refuse to bow down to your mind and refuse to accept these *saṁskāras* that control you.

Saṁskāras can also be dissolved. In our programs like ASP or LBP level 1 and NSP or LBP Level 2, we teach meditation techniques to effectively reduce and remove *saṁskāras*. On an ongoing basis, our healers learn special meditation methods to continuously dissolve *saṁskāras*. These techniques are an extension of what Krishna has spoken about in Gita.

All meditation techniques bring you into the present moment. When you are in the present moment, you renounce attachment to fantasies about the future. You detach yourself from the results of your action. This alone leads you into liberation from the bondage of *saṁskāra*.

Surrender to the master, surrender to the universe, is the ultimate technique to rid oneself of all bondages, *karma*, *vāsanā* and *saṁskāra*, of the past, present and future. I instruct Nithya Healers that they cannot and should not wish that the person they are healing be healed. The affirmation if at all needed will be: Let whatever is good happen! That is all. The universe has the intelligence (*buddhi*) to decide how to use its power (*śakti*). The healer does not. The healer is solely the instrument connecting the person to the healing energy.

When people come to me for help, I usually say one of two things. To those who come purely for material assistance, health and wealth, I say, 'I shall pray to Anandeshwara to help you.' To those who come as sincere seekers, connected to me at the being level, my disciples and devotees, I say 'I will take care.' Ask my disciples about the power of these words.

I say this to those who come in a mode of total surrender. They have such absolute trust in me that they tell me, 'Please say you will take care.' They know at their being level that once they have downloaded their problems and pain to

me, it is no longer their burden. It is mine. They know it so deeply that there is not an iota of doubt in their minds that the problem has disappeared. In fact, many no longer feel that they need to be in my physical presence. Such is their surrender and the trust born out of surrender.

I do nothing with them. All I do is pass their problems on to *Parāśakti*, the universal feminine energy of the cosmos; that is all. I have already surrendered to Her. Not one finger of mine can move without Her command. So, what can I do? But such is Her compassion that She responds every time. When the being surrenders, when the ego and mind surrender, She takes over. On the other hand, if you are filled with your ego, there is no place for Her.

So I tell my healers, when you start healing and go into the healing meditation focusing on the *Ānanda Gandha cakra* (energy center), get out of the way so that I can come in. This means, I am asking you to give way so that the universal energy can come into you.

This is what Krishna, the greatest master of all, the *Parama guru*, the *Jagat guru*, has repeated throughout the Gita. He does not ask you to surrender to Him out of His ego. He asks you to surrender to Him out of His deep compassion. What can you give Him that He does not have?

Where else would you want to go since only He can grant everything you want? More importantly, only He can grant you what you need to free you from your suffering forever. Who else can do this for you? No one.

Don't lose hope. There is no need to do that. Krishna is a beacon. All you need is trust in Him.



Energy Darśan

18.62 Surrender to Him completely. By His grace you will attain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

Krishna switches gears and starts giving Arjuna the experience. He starts radiating eternal consciousness. He is putting Arjuna into that consciousness, into the experience of enlightenment.

Just relax for a few minutes. Relax from all the thoughts and ideas going on in your head. There is every possibility that you can also glimpse what Arjuna received by His grace. We always miss due to our instinct to survive and possess. For a few minutes, relax from thoughts. You can pick them up later. There is no problem in that. Just for a few moments keep them away from your consciousness. Drop them from your inner space so that you may glimpse that consciousness. There is a distinct possibility that you may experience what Arjuna experienced by the grace of Krishna.

Throughout Bhagavad Gita, Krishna has been saying, surrender to Me. He has been saying 'I' and 'Me', meaning that He represents the Divine. Now, suddenly, He changes that and says surrender unto Him as a third person. For the first time He refers to the Divine in this way. This means that He has expanded beyond the body. He now speaks as *Parabrahma Krishna*, the universal Krishna. He speaks from the eternal consciousness. That is the reason He says surrender unto Him and not surrender unto Me. Earlier He used the word 'I' or 'Me'. This change means that He is in an expanded state to put Arjuna into the experience. In order to give a disciple the experience, the master must be in the same state, too. That is why Krishna went into that expanded state.

Before a *pūjā*, the priest chants the *aṅganyāsa karanyāsa mantra* - *anguṣṭābhyām daśadibhyām* – these *mantras* are chanted in order to expand and go beyond body

consciousness. These purify the body and help us go beyond the body. Actually, purifying and going beyond are the same thing.

So now Krishna says ‘Surrender unto Him’ since He has expanded and He cannot use the word ‘Me’. He says, ‘Bharata, surrender unto Him utterly. By His grace you will attain eternal consciousness and supreme peace.’

He has expanded into that consciousness and is about to give energy *darśan*. He is ready to shower His energy on Arjuna.

Q: Swamiji, you referred to the energy *darśan* that Krishna gives Arjuna. You also give energy *darśan*. Can you please explain what it signifies?

Yes, the energy *darśan* or *ānanda darśan* (blissful *darśan*) that Krishna gives Arjuna is the same *darśan* that enlightened masters give to devotees and disciples. The *darśan* is that of the universe, cosmic energy, and the *Parāśakti*, and not of the master’s form in front of you.

When I talk about giving *ānanda darśan* to you, I must become an observer and look at myself as a witness, since the player is *Parāśakti*!

The word *darśan* comes from the Sanskrit word, *darśana* that refers to the experience, the vision that is not just what you see in front of you. This *darśana* happens with the unseen third eye. The purpose of the master giving *ānanda darśan* is to awaken the intelligence and awareness in you by opening the third eye. *Darśana* is not a physical experience. It is a being-level experience.

During the energy *darśan*, or *ānanda darśan* as I term it, the master is one with the universal consciousness. He is the formless in form. He is Existence itself. Through *ānanda darśan*, out of His deep love and compassion, the master opens Himself completely to everyone so that they experience the universal consciousness through Him.

The recipient feels the master’s compassion with tremendous intensity. The master radiates the Existential energy during *darśan*. At the time of *darśan*, He makes himself available totally in order to instill the divine energy into everyone. In each one He plants the seed that can flower and radiate His fragrance, the fragrance of Existence.

If you are receptive to the energy, it can penetrate and transform you at the being level. If you can be silent within, free from the grips of mundane logic and

free from thoughts and words, you can become a drop in the ocean of bliss that surrounds you.

The only thing expected from the devotee is a trusting, receptive approach. If you drop your mind for a few minutes and fall in tune with the mood that is created, you will pay your deepest gratitude to the whole of Existence that the master represents.

The joy created during *darśan* that is supported by *kīrtans* (devotional music) and a general expression of devotion, dissolves the mind and takes one beyond to feel oneness with the Whole. The mind is on vacation, freeing the being of its burden, allowing the being to experience what it had always longed to experience. The Being experiences what it truly is, and revels in the joy of Existence of which it is an integral part. The mind vanishes, leaving a void that is filled with an overflowing love for life.

Ānanda darśan is the time when barriers break — social, economic, and so forth. One sees Divinity in everyone and enjoys the liberation this feeling brings. All identity of self and of the other disappears and everything and everyone is accepted with sheer bliss. Every being shines forth in its brilliance, radiating the divinity within.

You can hear the master's words at other times. But during *darśan*, the master does not speak. He bares Himself. It is the greatest, direct gift from the master to each person. If you are silent and aware, you see it. If you are caught in thinking and verbalizing, you miss it.

If you are analyzing the situation, deciding on whether to accept or reject the scene of *darśan*, you miss it. If you can just be, without agreeing or disagreeing, without passing judgment, without trying to verbalize and without positive or negative feeling, you catch the thread! If you can be with the love of realization and not the love of any theory, you experience it. With no exchange of words, something in you starts to respond. *Darśan* has been a transforming experience for thousands of people.

People from all over the world carry wonderful reminiscences of *ānanda darśan*. People report visions, ailments dissolving, healing, and many intense spiritual experiences.

Different people perceive this energy in different ways. There is no need to be greedy for an experience during *darśan*. Allow whatever happens to happen. Then

you will create a space within to receive *darśan*. Energy is intelligence and knows what to do. There is no need to have expectations. There is no need to expect an experience of light or emptiness, or even to feel the energy.

Being in a prayerful mood is enough. This transforms you more than words. Prayerful does not mean asking for things. Prayerful means feeling deep gratitude towards everything. Of course, the master allows you to ask what you wish at *darśan*. You can ask about any problem for which you seek a solution.

But the moment is so overwhelming that it becomes difficult to ask. The moment you are in an asking mood, you miss the experience. To ask, the mind must step in. And when the mind steps in, you miss the experience.

When questions are asked at *darśan*, the master answers with compassion and concern. His answers are unique to each person even if the question is the same. Each being is different. Each person's path is unique. Everyone is connected to the master radially and independently. The master looks into the being of the person and answers the questioner, not the question! For those with complete trust, He says, 'I will take care.' People shed anxieties and depression with those words of assurance from the master.

For those few moments, if we can forget our prayers and place our trust in Existence, we can experience. A little faith that Existence knows what is best for us is enough. If we go with this attitude, we receive what the master tries to give us. Nothing more is needed.

Darśan is a wonderful opportunity to move from communication to communion with the master. In the lectures, we ask questions for intellectual clarity. We try to relate with our mind. We collect words and more words at the end of every session. And we come back with more words and questions! *Darśan* is the time to relate at the being level.

Allow some experience to happen in you. Leave the mind and be with the heart at least during this time. You cannot become one with Existence through your mind. It happens with your heart or being. Any merging happens with the heart or being. *Darśan* is when the master looks directly into your eyes and you can see your reflection in Him. He heals with His look, touch and embrace. With every *darśan*, you go back a different person, a little more evolved.

Every *darśan* is different. The whole beauty of Existence, of Nature, is that it never repeats itself. That is why it is said that God is an artist, not an engineer.

Every *darśan* unfolds in a different way, with a new dimension, a new intensity and a new unknown fervor. Every *darśan* seems like the best until the next one unfolds!

The master's transfer of energy at *ānanda darśan* can put you into the desireless state. If you are loving and open, it can transform you in so many wonderful ways. With effort, you can achieve the desireless state with consistent intellectual understanding and meditation. However, *darśan* is when you can be directly put into the desireless state purely by the master's grace.

If you can become completely filled with joy and gratitude and be totally present, the energy can penetrate you. It can help you fulfill your desires and take you to a desireless state beyond that. Being in complete joy is being in a madly desirous state of nothing in particular! It is intense desire for nothing in particular. In this state, you are receptive and open to the master. You don't need to make effort. You must drop your efforts; that's all! Then the energy takes care. It does the rest. Energy is intelligence. The Existential energy can flow through you and do whatever is needed if you just allow it.

Darśan means getting a clear vision and a flash of clarity. It is seeing without a blur. The energy that radiates can do miracles at the being level. If you bring in enough awareness at *darśan*, you glimpse the vastness of the ocean of Existence: a pool of serenity shines forth amidst the fervor created and amidst the music and dance. Even with the noise around, you find the central chord of vibrant silence that runs through the whole show. Then you understand the concept of remaining centered and being all-inclusive. You understand how not to exclude or renounce, but to encompass everything while remaining centered and being a blissful watcher of the whole show!

After *darśan*, after every touch, one's intelligence increases; desires acquire more clarity and either get fulfilled or simply drop.

You lie completely bare before the master. He always sees you at the being level. Any attempt to ask anything is a waste of time because you only express deep confusion and ignorance. You don't know what you need. He knows what must be done to take you further. You never need to ask. The surrender itself fulfills.

If you allow the experience to enter you and express itself in joyful ways, if you can be total and ecstatic and if you resonate with the energy, forgetting yourself completely, you are automatically emptied of your accumulated words and thoughts. There will be only emptiness and joy in you when you go near the master.

In that mood, you are silent inside. You are receptive and loving. You are bubbling with inner silence. At that time, the energy can enter you like a ray, like a flash. It can go deep and touch you at the seed level. It transforms you in ways that you don't know.

The Existential energy expresses itself and flows through every inch of the master's form. Just watching him can bring glimpses of the divinity it embodies. The more you allow yourself to dissolve in the experience, the more you resonate with it; and the more you can be awakened to the touch and flow of the cosmic energy.

This is the time to break your pseudo-identity, to break your social conditionings and celebrate. This is not the time to fasten your seat belts and sit back. The energy will touch you, but you will not be open to receive it!

Just being near the master at this time can cause you to merge into Him. It can make consciousness meet consciousness. Like a river merging into the ocean, you merge into the master who is the oceanic Existence, the formless in form, the universal consciousness. That is why you feel relaxed and rejuvenated after *darśan*. Sometimes it goes on for long hours throughout the night. Yet, you feel vibrant at the end. A shift in consciousness lifts you to a higher plane.

When one is near the master at *darśan*, unconscious fears, guilt, desires, intense silence, joyful tears and more surface. One might not know why, because these surface from the deep unconscious layers due to being in the master's presence.

One need not hold back these emotions or suppress them. Let them surface freely in the presence of the master. Let them come out in totality. All that you cannot express in words come out as emotions. These are the deeply engraved unconscious memories that you are unaware of, and yet trouble you. This is a rare opportunity to be free from these engraved memories. All these emotions will be wiped out at the root level. The master's overflowing compassion wipes them out. The repressive structure that you have built over the years can break at this time if you give it a chance.

Whatever happens during *darśan* happens in totality. You clap your hands, dance, laugh or cry without logic; this results from the totality of feelings swelling from within. Tears or laughter do not arise from specific reasons of joy or sorrow. They are expressions of an overwhelming, deep feeling within. The being is never given a chance to express itself because of the mind. It has been repressed and overpowered by the mind. This is when the being expresses itself. And when this

happens, the expressions cannot be framed within the relations of logic. Pure totality expresses itself; that's all.

You are not an integrated personality as you may think. You are composed of many fragments that fight with each other within you. At one moment you desire one thing; the next moment, you want something else. A particular emotion rises in you at one moment. The opposite emotion surfaces the next moment. You are chaotic, although you may appear calm on the surface. *Darśan* is the time to drop this inner struggle and allow the master to take over and do what is needed. He knows you. And He will do whatever is necessary if you relax and let go. *Darśan* is the time to put aside learning, collected judgments and conclusions about ourselves and open up to the master's transforming love.

With every *darśan*, the master lights your being. The real transfer from Him happens at this time. He gives the Ultimate to you. He gives you His own Light. Once He lights you, if you allow, you can carry it as your torch wherever you are, wherever you go, in whatever you do. One touch is enough. It is an opportunity to know without knowledge and experience without explanation.

If the energy touches you deeply, your life can be transformed forever. A space is created in you where awareness enters and dissolves your questions. There are many doors to the Divine. Once you enter, the experience is the same. *Darśan* opens all possible doors. It is an invitation to the ultimate experience. Everyone's door is different. The door doesn't matter, as long as you find one.

The energy released during *darśan* is so intense that it can kindle your intelligence to move from intellect to intuition. Most of the time you are caught up in the deep unconscious patterns of your mind. These pull you repeatedly towards familiar patterns of misery and unconscious decision-making. With the power of intuition, you can tap into the energy of your being and harness it in decision-making in any sphere of life. The energy at *darśan* can open up this intuitive power in you.

You may not understand the depth of what happens during *ānanda darśan*, the tremendous gift given to you. Even so, try to be open, enjoy it and accept it with openness. The rest will happen automatically.

Ānanda darśan is when you can come close to the master, feel His Love through physical proximity and feel the direct transfer of energy from Him. *Darśan* can destroy what you are not: all that causes illusion in you, and all the borrowed

desires that cause misery in you. *Darśan* is a tremendous opportunity to become one with the universal consciousness and dissolve into the Ocean of Bliss!

Ānanda darśan, the energy play, is a pure gift from the master. It is an unconditional offering arising out of deep compassion. You merely need to be open and let it flow in, that's all.

Krishna was choosy. Of all the people around Him, He chose to impart His energy to Arjuna. I am not like that. All are welcome. Times are different now. Needs are different. The more people that one can direct towards the *Parāśakti*, the universal energy, and the more people one can energize to have a glimpse of the Existential bliss, the greater are the chances to bring peace and happiness to planet earth. That is my mission. That is what *Parāśakti* directs me to do.



Surrender To Me

18.63 I have explained the knowledge that is the secret of secrets. After fully reflecting on this, do as you wish.

18.64 Because you are My dear friend, I express this truth to you. This is the most confidential of all knowledge. Hear this from Me. It is for your benefit.

18.65 Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will certainly attain Me. This I promise you because you are My very dear friend.

18.66 Abandon all principles and concepts of right conduct and simply surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Have no worry.

What powerful words! Only the Divine can speak these words of absolute authority.

Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. This is the way you will come to Me without fail. I promise this because you are My great *bhakta* (devotee) and very dear to Me.

Now He comes to the ultimate teaching. This is the essence of all His teachings, the quintessence of Bhagavad Gita. He wakes up Arjuna with this verse and puts him into Krishna consciousness, the eternal consciousness or enlightenment.

Krishna showers Himself on Arjuna, waking him up to the experience of the Whole.

He says, 'Give up everything, whatever you know as *dharma*, the rules and regulations of the outer life and of the inner life. Drop everything that you know and surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from everything. Do not fear.' Krishna gives him *abhaya*, complete protection.

*sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā sucaḥ*

He liberates Arjuna with these words. He gives the ultimate experience to Arjuna. With this verse, Krishna makes Arjuna drop everything and liberates him. He gives him a conscious experience of the ocean. He asks Arjuna to drop his ideas about being a separate bubble, relax and realize the truth. Even the idea of the ocean or of God are simply our ideas. Krishna makes Arjuna drop those ideas and makes him explode into Krishna consciousness, the eternal consciousness.

Now Krishna enters into the actual experience.

Krishna liberates Arjuna and gives him the ultimate experience permanently. We cannot call him Arjuna any longer because he has become Krishna. He has achieved Krishna consciousness. Now only Krishna exists. As long as Krishna and Arjuna existed, there were two entities. But now that they have become one, neither exists. There is no name for it. It is only energy.

Forget about *dharma*, the codes of conduct laid down by religions, and turn to Me. I shall be your savior, says Krishna.

Do not misunderstand, misquote and misuse these words. You will do yourself the greatest disservice. The Divine does not care whether you are good or evil. The Divine does not care whether you are a saint or sinner. A saint and a sinner, a celibate monk and a prostitute have equal chances of reaching the Divine. This is the truth. Of course, when you come close to the Divine, the energy transforms you. Negativities will be dissolved. They will be burnt and you will be pure as you were at birth.

Religion is the creation of men. Spirituality is the creation of enlightened masters who live in the energy of the Divine with total awareness. Krishna, Shiva, Buddha, Mahavira and Jesus were enlightened masters. They related to no religion. The followers who interpreted them to the best or worst of their understanding created religions. The followers established *dharma*, the codes of righteous conduct. No God or master is interested in coming down to tell you how you should behave. They tell you to be in awareness and that will put you on the right path.

Thus, Krishna says with absolute conviction and authority: Forget all codes of conduct, give up all religions and come to Me with awareness. This is your salvation.

Krishna is *triguṇa rahita*: beyond the attributes of nature and *karmic* influence. Merging with Him, surrendering to Him takes you beyond all *karmic* bondages.

If you understand this verse and act accordingly, you will be liberated. That is Krishna's promise.

Take a few moments now to pray to *Parabrahma* Krishna, the universal Krishna, who showered enlightenment on Arjuna and gave him the ultimate experience. Pray that He may shower the same experience on us or give us a glimpse of the ultimate Truth. Take a few moments to pray. Please close your eyes and pray intensely to Him. Do not think that He is unavailable now. He is always available to everybody on planet earth. He may not have the body, but He is available in the form of energy. The statues in the temples are called *arcāvatāra*. That means 'incarnation of the Divine'. He is available to us all the time, whenever we call Him. Close your eyes and pray intensely to Him to shower us with the same experience He showered on Arjuna.

Relax in silence and listen to the words of Krishna.

Q: Swamiji, is the state of surrender that Krishna talks about in the Gita the same as your concept of 'unclutching'?

Yes. Unclutching is the surrender of thoughts, the surrender of the mind. It is the ultimate surrender. When you surrender the process of connecting thoughts, which is what unclutching signifies, you move into the present moment. In the present moment your mind dissolves and your ego disappears.

This is the state of renunciation and surrender that Krishna advises.

We are forever controlled by our senses. What we perceive through our senses and what we perceived in the past through our senses drives us on our path to the future. Sensory perceptions create thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Emotions and thoughts give birth to our mental setup and attitude. Understanding the play of emotions and thoughts is the first and final step towards moving beyond it.

Man by his nature is an unclutched and blissful being.

Every thought that arises within us is like a bubble that forms, rises and dies. Every thought rises independently and dies before the next thought comes up. For

example, if you are sitting in a chair and suddenly get up, the moment you decide to get up, the thought of sitting has left you. If you are working on your computer and decide to shut down the machine, the thought that you want to work has died at that moment. So every thought is unconnected and happens in a series, one after the other. One thought must die before the next one comes up. This is our true nature.

Our true nature is to renounce thoughts every moment; to allow each thought to rise like a bubble and burst and then allow the next thought to rise. Our thoughts have a vertical existence like rising bubbles.

This process of allowing thoughts to rise and die without trying to connect them is being *unclutched*. As long as this natural process is allowed to happen, things are alright.

In spite of this, we start connecting thoughts randomly and forming a shaft. By doing so, we convert the vertical and unclutched process into a horizontal one with linear connectivity. The whole problem starts here. As long as each thought is allowed to rise and die, we can take on any load on the physical and mental planes. Our consciousness will remain light and blissful. Once we start connecting thoughts, our consciousness suffers. We feel burdened. It damages our being.

Emotions such as worry, lust, discontentment, jealousy, fear, ego and attention-need are connections that we make between independent incidents and between independent thoughts by linking or clutching thoughts together. We create a concept for ourselves and start to relate with that concept. We create an imaginary shaft with our thoughts and we suffer because of this.

These emotions create all forms of violence including religious wars, social conflicts or political unrest. The basis or root of all forms of violence is our emotions, and the basis of our emotions is our habit of creating imaginary shafts of our thoughts and empowering them to work on us.

While creating these shafts, the key thing we do is choose thoughts depending on whether we want pain or pleasure. We pick pleasant thoughts at random and connect them to form a shaft of pleasure or pick negative thoughts and connect them to form a shaft of pain. We create shafts of pain and pleasure alternately for ourselves and keep oscillating between these two emotions. To unclutch from this shaft is the master key to a blissful life.

If we deeply analyze how we connect our thoughts instead of renouncing them, we will understand how we create suffering for ourselves. As such, there is no connection between our thoughts. The mind finds the connection.

We have been trained to feed on words and thoughts. That is why we create these shafts. We feed on words because we always operate out of fear or greed. Out of fear or greed, we create connectivity in our thoughts. We are afraid to let go of this process because if we do, there is nothing else to hold onto. We have never experienced an unclutched state of mind where there is no shaft, but only bubble-like thoughts.

In the unclutched state, there is no scope for fear or greed. You will simply BE. It is a dimension that we rarely experience because we are used to clutching onto the familiar shaft of thoughts.

We wonder how we can exist without clutching onto the shaft of thoughts, when the truth is we can live in an unclutched fashion blissfully. We see it as something impossible!

We fail to see how mythical the whole thing is. Our mind is a myth. We have empowered it and become a slave to it. It is mental slavery.

Watch the thoughts rising in you. Clearly see how each thought rises and dies and the next thought comes up. Observe how you effortlessly connect these thoughts and create ideas and concepts. Watch the play of these concepts upon yourself. You will understand how you create the whole myth. Connecting thoughts is the original sin.

Living in an unclutched fashion is the key to blissful living. Decide not to connect thoughts and not to pass judgment on any thought or incident. When you find yourself connecting, unclutch from the connection. Continue to unclutch every time you remember this technique. Your mental setup will automatically be transformed. The psychological revolution will happen in you.

When we work in an unclutched fashion, our capacity expands. We take on more responsibility without becoming stressed. We do not experience mood swings between pain and pleasure. We are blissful all the time. Normally we are accustomed to happiness that comes due to a reason. This reason is another shaft that we create with our thoughts. Once we stop creating these shafts, we are blissful all the time.

The term unclutched does not mean to be aloof and cold to people and situations around us. Just don't connect thoughts and start the process of creating shafts; that's all.

Remember that you are a beautiful and unclutched being by nature. You will stop creating misery for yourself and others.



I Shall Not Leave

18.67 This knowledge should never be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerity, who is without devotion, who does not desire to listen, or who speaks ill of Me.

18.68 One who communicates the supreme secret to the devotees performs the highest devotional service to Me, and at the end he will without doubt come back to Me.

18.69 No other person shall do a more pleasing service to Me, and no one on the earth shall be more dear to Me.

18.70 I say that One who studies this sacred dialogue worships Me with the sacrifice of his intelligence.

18.71 One who listens with faith and without envy becomes free from sinful reactions and attains to the planets where those of merit dwell.

18.72 O Arjuna, did you listen to this with single-minded attention? Has your delusion born of ignorance been completely destroyed?

These words are meant not merely for Arjuna, but for all of humanity.

Krishna says here that we should read, listen and understand this dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, between *nara* and *Narayana*. Nothing more needs to be read or listened to. Everything we need is here.

Only one who is in deep devotion to Me should read this. I have conveyed here that which is most beneficial, the secret of how to live and how to reach Me. One who understands this and drops his mind with his focus entirely upon Me, shall reach Me without a doubt.

This is Krishna's promise.

He blesses the whole universe with His grace and compassion. He showered His blessing on Arjuna and made him merge with Him. The same consciousness is being showered on the whole universe. He declares that whoever studies this sacred conversation will achieve His eternal consciousness. He blesses us with His grace and assures us that we can achieve Him through this *jñāna yajña*, sacrifice of intellect. That is, by offering ourselves into that knowledge, by completely purifying ourselves in that knowledge, we can achieve Him. We can disappear into Him. When we put anything into the fire, it disappears. In the same way, when we immerse ourselves in the study of Gita, we will not remain as we are. We will disappear into Him. Only He remains, only He exists.

The whole experience of the Truth has descended on Arjuna. Krishna's blessings are upon us also. Let us pray to the ultimate consciousness to put us into that same energy. Relax into that energy. May the grace and compassion of Krishna that was showered on Arjuna, be showered on us.

Earlier Krishna said that He would appear again and again whenever He is needed to restore equilibrium between good and bad. He is the only great master who has the courage to say, 'I am not the last master, it is not that there will be no one after Me.' Instead He says, 'I shall appear again and again, *sambhavāmi yuge yuge*.'

Krishna will not reappear in his Vasudeva Krishna form with peacock feathers and a flute! That is the mistake we make in our assumption. His energy will reappear. He will reappear in the form of enlightened masters, time and again. He will come again and again to restore the balance, redeem the good and destroy the evil.

This is the last time Krishna speaks in the Bhagavad Gita. He asks, 'Arjuna, have you listened to me with attention? Has your delusion disappeared?'

Until the end He is the teacher. He is full of compassion. His concern is only for Arjuna and the rest of humanity. 'Have you understood?' He asks. 'Have your doubts disappeared? Do you need anything more?'

This is the greatness of masters. Nothing concerns them except the deliverance of their disciples. That is why they have come here. Otherwise why should they waste their time on planet earth? They can be immersed in the blissful energy that they are part of without disturbance.

My disciples understand when I tell them that the only time I feel anything like sadness is when a disciple leaves me. It saddens me because he is losing a great opportunity. His spirit brought him to me for redemption. If the body-mind does not cooperate, the spirit must live again and again until it gets the opportunity to be liberated. Each cycle of birth that the spirit undertakes, it suffers and regrets not having taken that final step.

No one who has crossed my ashram gates can ever leave me. Even if they leave, I shall not leave them. I shall be with them. That one moment of intelligence that brought them in is enough for me to care of them.

Those who have understood the formless form that resides in me know that I am part of them. Wherever they are, I am part of them.

This is Krishna's promise: Listen to Me, understand Me and come to Me; then you are a part of Me.

Q: How can we surrender the ego, when this desire to surrender is itself an expression of the ego?

How can you surrender the ego, when it does not exist? Suppose you are sitting in a dark room. You want the darkness to disappear. Can you push it out? Can you fight darkness and force it to leave? No! No matter how long you try, you will ultimately be defeated - and that too by something which does not exist!

The ego is like darkness. It has no positive existence. Just as darkness is the absence of light, the ego is the absence of awareness. Struggling to kill the ego is like struggling to push darkness out of the room. To expel the darkness, you must forget about dealing with the darkness. Focus your energy on light instead. Bring a small lamp into the room and darkness will flee on its own! So, forget about the ego. Instead, focus on bringing a lamp of awareness into your being. When your entire consciousness has become a flame, the ego is no more.

The ego is an illusion. You cannot surrender it when you are unaware, because you don't know how. Of course, you cannot surrender it when you become aware either - because then you realize that there is nothing left to surrender! What you have heard, read and been taught i.e., 'Surrender the ego in order to attain Self-realization' does not work. It happens the other way round. Self-realization dawns

and suddenly you cannot find the ego anymore. The surrender has already happened, just like that.

On the other hand, I am glad that the question has arisen in your being. The ego is the root cause of all your anxieties, sorrow, and tensions. It is your doorway to hell. To actively feel that you want to drop the ego, to feel the need to be rid of this burden is a step towards awareness. You are stirring from your sleep!



Krishna Is Present

18.73 Arjuna said: O Lord, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy, and I am now firm and free from doubt and ready to obey you.

18.74 Sanjaya said: Thus have I heard the conversation of two great souls, Krishna and Arjuna. And so wonderful is that message that my hair stands on end.

18.75 By the mercy of Vyasa, I have heard these most confidential words directly from Krishna, the master of all mysticism, who was speaking personally to Arjuna.

18.76 O King, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous and holy dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I take pleasure, being thrilled every moment.

18.77 O King, when I remember the wonderful form of Lord Krishna, I am struck with even greater wonder, and I rejoice again and again.

18.78 Wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Partha, the supreme carrier of bow and arrow, there will certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.

In these last verses Arjuna and Sanjaya take over.

Arjuna bows down to the master and says, 'All my doubts are gone; I understand. I am ready. I shall obey whatever you say and I shall fight.'

The rest is history. Under the guidance of Arjuna, the Kaurava army is annihilated. All the Kaurava brothers, all the great teachers and all the great warriors perish. The Pandava brothers win and Yudhishtira conducts the *rājasūya* and other fire sacrifices to signify his ascendance to the throne.

It is also history that in due course all the Pandava brothers die, as does the great master Krishna. He gives up His mortal form. This is the story of life. As long as you are in any form, the form will perish. The energy lives on. That is what Krishna taught in these chapters and verses. Sacrifice your form and gain the formless.

Now Sanjaya comes back into the picture. Neither Krishna nor Arjuna can speak since both of them are in a different mood. Arjuna has disappeared and Krishna is in ecstasy. Both are in no mood to speak. Sanjaya started speaking when Arjuna was in depression and Krishna had nothing to say at that time. Then when Krishna was giving the first experience to Arjuna, Krishna was in the higher consciousness and Arjuna was in ecstasy. Sanjaya came in to speak at that time because both were not in a mood to speak. Now Sanjaya comes back again. Not only are Krishna and Arjuna not in a mood to speak, they are both no longer there. Arjuna has disappeared into the pure consciousness of *Parabrahma* Krishna. They have nothing to say.

Sanjaya addresses Dhritarashtra, 'O King, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous spiritual dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I feel a great joy or ecstasy at every moment.' Sanjaya is expressing his joy and bliss and says, '*muhurmuhuh*, again and again, whenever I recall it, I am filled with ecstasy. This truth fills my being completely. I am showered with divine grace.'

Sanjaya says, 'By the mercy of Vyasa, I heard these confidential talks directly from the master of all mysticism, Sri Krishna.' Sanjaya expresses gratitude and joy at hearing this by the grace of Vyasa. Vyasa refers to the guru (master) here. In north India, wherever the scriptures are studied, that place is called a *Vyāsa pīṭa*. Vyasa is the *ādi guru* (first master). So he expresses gratitude to the master for giving him the opportunity to listen to the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. Vyasa is also the author of the epic Mahabharata, of which Bhagavad Gita is a part.

Sanjaya says, 'O King, as I remember the wonderful form of Lord Krishna, I am awestruck and I rejoice again and again.' He has nothing much to say! He overflows with ecstasy. He ends the whole thing beautifully with this verse.

'Wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power and morality. This is my opinion.' He ends the whole thing with a beautiful auspicious blessing. Wherever the name of Krishna, the divine energy of Krishna is present and wherever Arjuna dwells, there will also be victory, prosperity, wealth

and morality. All the divine positive energy will shower there. He concludes with this beautiful blessing, this beautiful verse.

*yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanurdharaḥ
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvānītir matirmama*

Whenever we read, teach or listen to Bhagavad Gita, Krishna and Arjuna are present. They are present in their formless form. Make no mistake, they are here. They have been here throughout these eighteen days.

You are the fortunate listeners and readers of this mystic dialogue between the two great souls, the master and the disciple. You are blessed with wealth, health and success in whatever you undertake. Go with this Krishna consciousness and you will be in *nityānanda*, eternal bliss.

Q: Swamiji, I have not understood how surrender and renunciation can be used as a technique. Please explain.

First, understand what I mean by the word ‘technique’, and then you will understand ‘ultimate technique’.

All cultures, religions and spiritual traditions accept one thing: Man has come down from his ultimate level. Man is not as he is supposed to be. The Christian tradition says that Adam and Eve were pure, full of bliss, joy and ecstasy. Once Adam tasted the apple, he came down. Humanity degenerated. The Hindu tradition, the eastern mythology, says there was a time called the *satya yuga*, the Age of Truth. In the course of time, we became impure; we have fallen from our original level.

Buddhism says humanity lived in the age of *dharmma* or pure righteousness. In the course of time, we fell from that state. According to every tradition, man is not as he should be. Man has fallen from his conscious level or his level of Self.

A beautiful *Upaniṣad mantra* says: *amṛtasya putrah*. This means, ‘You are children of Immortality. You are the children of God.’

All traditions, religions and masters agree upon one thing: Man has degraded himself. Man has fallen from his true nature. He had been in a higher state. He has descended from his reality.

According to science, man evolved from the animals. According to spirituality, man came down from God. If you understand one thing, you will understand these two concepts. Whatever is presented in your mind, in front of you, as an ideal, your mind naturally goes towards that. All the traditions present the ultimate consciousness, or ultimate Realization, as an ideal. Every religion and spiritual tradition says we have fallen from our original level. We must return to that consciousness.

Christians use the word Heaven.

Hindus use the word *mokṣa*

Buddhists use the word *nirvāṇa*

Each one has its own words, but all of us understand that we are supposed to reach a higher level than where we exist currently.

A technique is the method that takes us to a higher level. That is how I define a technique. A technique is like a ladder that takes us to higher consciousness. It is a higher method. There are thousands and thousands of techniques in the world to elevate the level of our consciousness. Even sitting silently is a technique to go beyond the mind, to enter the higher consciousness and to elevate ourselves from the ordinary plane. There are thousands of methods. Every religion has thousands of techniques. Everything we do in the name of religion is a technique to elevate ourselves from lower consciousness to higher consciousness.

We try to move from man to God, from mortality to immortality, from mundane to divine.

Doing *ārati* or *pūjā* is a technique or method to reach God, to approach a higher state of consciousness. From an ordinary breathing technique to *pūjā* - all are techniques at different levels. Everything is a method to reach the Divine. The way in which we travel, the way in which we move towards consciousness, towards spirituality, is a technique.

In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna gives many techniques. He teaches Arjuna various meditation techniques or methods to evolve from the ordinary level to the higher level. They are methods to reach the higher consciousness, to reach the divine consciousness. He speaks about many techniques and methods. Every chapter, every verse, is a technique or method. After listening to so many techniques, Arjuna is totally confused. He asks the master, 'O Lord, after listening to thousands of techniques, after hearing about each and every method, I am more confused. Please tell me, what is the ultimate technique? What is the right technique?'

Even today, we are totally confused because we listen to many methods and techniques. Every master declares his own technique as the best. Every religious leader says his technique is the best. Every enlightened person offers his technique as the ultimate.

There is an interesting saying that if two *ṛṣis* (sages) say the same thing, we can be sure that one of them is a fraud! It's the truth. If two *ṛṣis* say the same thing, one is copying the other because no two enlightened beings speak or behave in the same way.

Enlightenment means flowering in a unique way. It is uniqueness. God never creates two things in the same way. He creates one-of-a-kind flowers. When a person becomes enlightened, he is totally unique.

Each master gives his method to humanity. Each person presents his or her technique. There are thousands and thousands of methods, thousands and thousands of techniques and thousands and thousands of ways to reach the Divine.

When Arjuna was confused, he asked, 'What is the best method? What is the ultimate technique? I have listened to so many methods from you.' At least Arjuna received all the meditations from the same master, but today, people listen from thousands of sources. Which is the best way?

In ancient times, meditation or spirituality was more or less a seller's market. Now, it is a buyer's market. In the past, it was a seller's market, the masters used to decide. Now disciples decide which is the best way. Go to the Internet - type 'meditation'. Hundreds of websites will give you the techniques, methods and details. Which one should we choose? What to do? What is the way? What is the method?

With more than ninety percent of the people, when they experience such confusion, they stop entering into spirituality. There is more confusion in this field than any other. Why? What is the actual method? What is the way? A confused Arjuna asks Krishna. 'What is the way? Tell me the final way, the final method, the ultimate technique.'

Finally, Krishna says very beautifully, 'This is the last technique, the ultimate technique: Dropping all the *Dharma*, dropping all the confusions, surrendering at My feet. I will take care and give you liberation.'

This is the gist of the whole Gita. Gita is the unabridged dictionary of the world's philosophies. You can see the seed of all the philosophical trends, the seed

of all traditions and the seed of all spiritual techniques in the Gita. It is an unabridged dictionary of the world's philosophies.

This is a beautiful verse:

*sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja ।
aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā sucaḥ ॥ 18.66*

Let me again translate it word by word. 'Drop all techniques, all methods and all the roots.' *Dharma* means the way of living. 'Drop all roots, all methods and all ways of living. Drop everything. Don't bother about anything. Surrender everything at My feet.'

Sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja: Don't carry even a bit; just drop everything, surrender your whole being to Me.

Aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā sucaḥ: 'I will remove all darkness, all negativities, and all sin from your being. I will liberate you. I will give you the ultimate enlightenment. Do not grieve.'

It's the final word given by Krishna. It's the last word anyone could give. It's the last word of all great masters. Jesus said, 'I am the way, the Truth and the Life.' (John 14.6)

In every master's life, the final teaching is surrender. What is the meaning of surrender?

As soon as we hear the word 'surrender,' we think: Oh, this is the easiest technique. This is the easiest method. For surrendering, we don't need to do anything. In any other method or meditation, we must do something. If it is a *pūjā*, we need to do something. If it is a fire ritual, we must do something. For every technique, we must do something. For surrender, we don't need to do anything.' Hence everyone feels surrendering means doing nothing.

Many people tell me, 'Swamiji, I've surrendered everything, but nothing is happening in me. What should I do?'

The statement, *I've surrendered everything, but nothing is happening inside me*, is wrong. If you have really surrendered, you will not expect that anything should or should not happen. When you say, *nothing is happening*, be very clear, you have not surrendered. Most of the time, people use the word 'surrender'. They never understand what it means. Now, let us look into the mechanics of surrender.

What actually is surrender? What do the masters mean by the word surrender? The way they use the word 'surrender' is totally different from the way people normally use it.

Let us see what the masters mean by surrender.

There are three levels of surrender:

First: Surrendering the *I*. Second: Surrendering the *Mine*. Third: Surrendering the *I* and *Mine*, both.

Let me explain step-by-step.

First: Surrendering the I

Surrendering the *I* is surrendering the ego, the mind, the mental setup. This is surrendering your conditions.

Somebody asked Ramakrishna Paramahansa, 'Master, I am addicted to alcohol. How can I give it up?'

He said, 'Surrender it to goddess Kali. You will automatically give it up. You will become all right.'

The disciple asked, 'How can I surrender this to Kali?'

He said, 'Before you drink, remember Kali. Offer the drink to Kali first, and then drink.'

This is a strange situation.

Even so, the man followed the master's advice. Before drinking, he offered the drink to Kali, and said, 'O Kali, this belongs to you.' After that, he drank it as *prasād* (holy sacrament).

According to the record, three days later the man said, 'I am unable to drink anymore. I have totally forgotten such things.'

Of course, when you sincerely surrender, a deep transformation happens. The change from mind and matter to energy happens in you. It's a deep transformation and difficult to explain. You can understand only when you have the taste, when you have at least one glimpse of surrender.

You may be surprised that a man could give up an addiction by offering alcohol to God, to a deity. But when he offered it, his heart began to wonder, 'How can I

offer this alcohol to Devi? How can I offer this to the Goddess whom I love?' Next he began to question, 'If I cannot offer alcohol to the Goddess, how can I drink it? After all, the same Goddess resides in my body. The same Goddess resides in my system. How can I offer that to myself?' Once he realized that he could not give the alcohol to God and that the same God resided in him, he naturally questioned, 'How can I pour it into myself and disturb the system?'

Surrender gave him intelligence. Surrender gave him understanding. This natural understanding made him drop what he had been doing.

One more thing, when you really, intensely offer your mental setup, or mental conditioning at the feet of the master or God, it gets totally disintegrated. The mind in itself is a habit. Your 'I' is a set of habits. Your ego is a set of conditions. When you offer that at the master's feet, when you surrender the 'I', it becomes totally disintegrated.

A small explanation will help you understand.

If you habitually drink coffee every morning at ten o'clock, as soon as it becomes ten o'clock, you don't need to think specially of coffee, the mind will automatically say, 'It is ten a.m. Get me coffee.' It is a habit. It is an addiction. Because of the habit, the mind asks for coffee.

In the same way, even your thoughts are conditioning. Even your moods are conditioning. Even your mind is a record. Just as you have the coffee habit, you also have the habit of worrying. You have the habit of having an excited mood. You have the habit of reacting to every situation. Even if you understand this one example, you can understand what I mean.

If somebody criticizes you, you immediately react. You become disturbed. After that, you criticize him in return or you rebuke him. If somebody praises you, you immediately feel flattered. You give him a good smile and feel great. You respond in a positive way. If he criticizes you, you choose to become disturbed or you decide to rebuke him. If he praises you, you choose to be flattered. Even this choice is your mental conditioning. It is your mental setup.

In the case of coffee addiction, initially it is you who chooses to drink coffee when the time comes. After choosing so many times, you forget that it is you who chooses. You become addicted. Likewise, whenever somebody criticizes you, you choose to be disturbed. Subsequently, after choosing so many times, you forget that it is you who chooses. Whenever somebody criticizes you, you automatically

become disturbed. You are upset. You start rebuking him. Your mental setup, your mental responses, your ego, are all your choices. They are your mental habits.

When you surrender the 'I', your mental setup, to the Divine, you can't choose. When you really surrender, even if somebody criticizes you, you can't choose to be offended. You can't choose to feel disturbed. You can't choose to rebuke him.

Whenever you bring in your mental setup, you react in accordance with your mental habits. When this is still the case, you cannot say you have surrendered. Real surrender can and will transform your life.

When you really surrender, whatever you choose is not really your choice. When you have surrendered, you are immune to criticism. You are not bothered by criticism. After being criticized, you cannot choose to be disturbed. You do not feel that you have been criticized. If you feel disturbed after some criticism, you have not surrendered. Again and again check whether you have surrendered or not.

Surrender is such a beautiful word that you can be easily cheated by it. We always say, 'I have surrendered everything to my master, to God. He will take care.' But all our surrender is only lip service. It is only skin deep. Scratch a little bit to see whether you have really surrendered or not.

When you have really surrendered your 'I', the mental setup is totally disintegrated. The egocentric mind becomes God-centric. Egocentric means eccentric. The egocentric mind becomes God-centric. When you surrender your 'I', your mind to God, your ego to God, your thinking system to God, it will be continuously bubbling with joy, because the Divine is always bliss, eternal bliss, *nitya ānanda*. Whenever you surrender your mental setup, you will be bubbling with joy, life and vibrancy.

Kids are continuously alive, moving around and jumping, especially children under seven years of age. Until that time, they do not have something called 'mind'. They have no mind. That is when their mind is getting prepared by the society's conditioning. Their mind is being created. Have you ever seen an ugly child? In all traditions and cultures, there is no ugliness in children. Even in places like Ethiopia, where war raged and poverty was rampant, children may be thin, lean, but they are not ugly. We always see a grace in children. Have you seen a single child who is ugly? No! Have you seen a single grown man who is beautiful? Why not?

The mind enters.

As long as we are not conditioned, we don't have a mind. We don't have an ego. We have a special grace around us. We have joy and ecstasy. We have innocence and simplicity. A man who has surrendered becomes a small child once again. That is why there is a beautiful word in Sanskrit, *dvija* meaning reborn.

When you surrender, you are re-born.

Our first birth happens from the mother and father. Our second birth happens from the guru and God.

When you take physical birth, you enter the physical body. The first birth is *janma*. When you surrender your ego at the feet of the guru or God, you take the next *janma*, the second birth. You are then called *dvija*. Those who have taken second birth are always called *dvija*.

When you surrender the 'I,' the mental setup, you experience immense pleasure, joy and ecstasy. Pleasure, joy and ecstasy are different layers. Pleasure happens because of sensory objects. Joy happens because of seeing nature, such as a beautiful mountain, snow, ocean or a forest. Ecstasy or bliss is whenever joy happens for no reason; it happens from your inner being. Pleasure, joy, bliss continuously happen in you, whenever you surrender your 'I', your ego.

When you surrender your ego, your mind becomes alive and spontaneously joyful. As of now, every moment you are preparing to live tomorrow. You make plans and big lists. Even to meet your friend, you prepare what you plan to talk about. While driving to your friend's house, what do you do? You mentally prepare what you will say and how you will present yourself. And if you are asked any question on another subject that you are unprepared for, you make a mess of the whole thing. That is why you don't have the strength to face an unexpected situation. You always make a script and enact the same script. You try your best to safeguard yourself from situations, from the realities, by making a shield – by preparing a script.

When you surrender, you move without a script! Whenever you move like that, in such a simple way, tremendous courage and trust walks through you.

A small story:

A rat entered a king's palace when the king was asleep. Suddenly the rat jumped on the king's face. The king was terribly shocked and started shouting. Somehow or the other the rat escaped. When the king came out of his bedroom, he commanded his general to kill the rat. The general entered the bedroom in search of the rat. Again as a coincidence, the rat jumped on the general's face.

The general ran away shouting, 'Oh, the rat is huge. It is too big!'

Anyway, he spread the news that there was a rat inside the king's room that was monstrously big and powerful! Nobody could do anything. Now, the king had to save his face. He started exaggerating the story of how powerful the rat was.

The news spread throughout the country: there is a rat that nobody can kill! Then the palace security commanded the palace cat to kill the rat. They had already brainwashed the palace cat that neither the king nor his army could do anything about this gigantic rat.

In view of that, the cat entered the room slowly since it was full of fear. Again the rat jumped, this time on the face of the cat! The cat was totally shocked. It became frightened and ran away. To save its face, the cat started telling more stories, 'No, no, no, it is not an ordinary rat. It is almost double my size!' It exaggerated with all kinds of stories just to save its face.

The news spread fast. Finally almost the whole country became afraid of the rat. The king declared that anybody who killed the rat would be given a sizeable reward. The news spread all over the country.

Finally, one farmer told his cat, 'If you kill this rat, at least you will have one day's food. I have nothing to feed you. Why don't you try?'

The cat said, 'Alright, why not? Let's go.'

All the other cats warned this cat, 'Don't try. Even the palace cat could do nothing. The palace cat has had lots of training in hunting rats. In spite of all the training, all those methods and techniques, it could do nothing. So, don't go and try anything foolish.'

But this cat said, 'Let me see what is there.'

The farmer took the cat to the king's palace. The cat simply entered the bedroom, killed the rat and came out. Subsequently, the king arranged a big celebration to honor the cat and gave it an award.

Somebody interviewed the cat, 'How did you manage? How did you kill the rat? The king could not do anything. The army chief could do nothing. Even the palace cat could not do anything. How did you manage to do it?'

The cat clearly replied, 'What? I 'managed'? No! I am a cat. It is my nature to kill rats!'

Over! One word — I am a cat. It is my nature to kill rats. There is nothing in between.

Our mind makes everything big. A simple statement, 'I am a cat, it is my nature to kill rats, there is nothing else,' says it all! What is there? *It is the nature*. The cat understood and respected *its* nature. By its very nature, it could do it. But what do we do? Even to face a friend, we need a script. We don't trust *our* nature. We don't believe we are spiritual beings and that we can achieve something.

For everything we need a script. We act only with the script. We never feel and do things. We never trust our nature. We never feel confident of achieving anything. The cat said, 'I am a cat. I can kill the rat!' Nothing special is necessary. There is no need for a technique. There is no need for training. 'My nature is to kill rats. That is more than sufficient.'

In the same way, *your* very nature can make you live in bliss. Your very nature can make you surrender to the Ultimate. It can make you surrender to the Divine. But we try anything and everything we know to complicate it! We know how to complicate. Our conditioning, our mind, and our working method make everything complicated. Even to talk to your wife, you need a script before coming home. You create a script about what to tell her.

One more beautiful point: If you tell the truth, you don't need to keep anything in memory. If you always speak the truth, you do not have problems. Many people ask me, 'Swamiji, can you please help me improve my memory?' Why do people want more memory?

If we look into ourselves, we will realize that we want to remember whatever lies we told the last time! If we speak the truth, we don't need more memory. We have enough memory. God has given us enough memory to live our life. Only to remember the lies, we need more memory! Where did we tell which lie and to

whom? Who knows? If we continuously tell lies, we must remember all the lies. That is why we usually struggle or suffer or complain saying, 'No, I have very poor memory.' If we speak the truth, we don't need much memory. If we live based on the Truth, we don't need a script to live our life.

Q: Why are we afraid to face life?

Every moment we project what we are not. That is the Truth. With everybody we project what we are not. That is why we prepare a big script. Everyday we must project the same personality. On the first day we projected ourselves in a certain way to others, so we must subsequently keep up the projection. To maintain that projection again and again and again, we must create our script.

I travel around the world and speak for hours at a stretch. People around me know that I neither have the time nor the inclination to prepare my discourses. I never prepare. The secretary informs me upon my entering the hall, 'Swamiji, today this is the subject.' Over!

Somebody asked me, 'Swamiji, how can you speak so many hours without preparation?'

If you live around me you will realize I have no time. Nothing is prepared. How do I speak then? I have only one answer. If somebody asks you, 'What is your name?' do you need to prepare? No! You don't need to prepare. Your name has become your experience. To mention your name, you don't need any preparation. In the same way, what I speak has become my experience. Whatever is your experience, whatever is your personality, to express it, you don't need preparation. You need to prepare only when you need to project something that is not in you.

Wherever we go, we carry a large mask to project something that is not reality. That is why we need such a big preparation. Yet even with all the groundwork, we end up making a mess of everything. We are so careful not to make a small mistake, yet we end up making big blunders. A big blunder simply results from living according to our preparation and enacting the drama! Whenever we prepare the script and enact it, we will be only re-living. We will never really live.

We will not live the moment. We will not live reality. We will not live life. We will merely repeat what we have prepared. We will react. We will be enacting our script.

When we really surrender the 'I', the ego, we surrender the mind that continuously prepares the script for our life. We will have tremendous spontaneity and courage. We will trust our intelligence. We will live our life as it is. We will live life as it happens. We will *accept* and *welcome* life as it flows into us.

A beautiful verse in the Gita says:

ananyāś-cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsatu |
teṣāṁ nityā bhiyuktānām yogakṣemaṁ vahā myaham || 9.22

'Continuously merge in Me. Merge in the Divine and all your needs and necessities will be taken care of by Me. Bringing them to you and taking care of them is My responsibility.'

Krishna assures us that He will manage both. We may think, 'How can this be?' Just by our surrendering to Him, how can He take care of our needs? What He means by, 'I'll take care,' is that He will activate or He will let you have the intelligence and courage to have everything and to love everything.

Right now you do not know how to live with whatever you may have acquired because you have continuously lived by your script, not with reality. Only when you surrender do you know how to live with reality. Only then do you live with the reality. Then you can enjoy whatever you have - your physical pleasures and physical comforts. All this happens only when you drop your mind. According to your mind, you have a script for anything and everything. You react according to that. You *never* respond. You *never* act from your Being or Self. Only when you drop the mental setup that is already prepared, that social conditioning creates in you, you see the growth that happens in you.

Growth is *never* evolution. By evolution, how long can growth happen? No, growth happens by revolution. Evolution means growing slowly. Revolution means surrendering. When you try to grow by yourself, only evolution happens. It took five thousand years in the evolutionary process for a chimpanzee to become a man. For a monkey to become a man, it took five thousand years! If you grow in the same way, it will take another five million years for man to become God. We cannot wait that long! So it's *never* evolution, it is *always* revolution. Surrender your whole being and you will *see* the revolution that happens in *your* being.

Surrendering 'I', surrendering the mental setup, totally changes your being. It shifts you from thinking to the energy, from the mind to no-mind, and from *mitya* (the temporal) to *nitya* (the eternal).

Second: Surrendering the Mine

Here comes the big trouble. *Mine* means possessiveness, to possess the things that we have.

We can surrender the mind, but never our possessions. We always think our ego comes before our possessions. On the contrary, *Tantra* says, 'Your ego is only based upon your possessions.' This is a strange statement but I analyzed it carefully. It is true. Your ego is a byproduct of your possessions, of your '*mine*'. It is from whatever you think of as '*mine*', that is from your possessions, that your sense of identity as '*I*' originates. If we look a little deeply, we can understand that our idea of '*mine*' creates our idea of '*I*'. Our mind is our possession. Even our body is our possession. So whatever we think of as ours, if we think, 'this is mine, that is mine,' from that root our ego starts growing.

If ego is akin to a tree, the root is '*mine*'. The tree is '*I*'. From the root '*mine*', the '*I*', the ego starts growing. If your '*mine*' is growing, if your possessions are growing, you feel expanded. You become solid. You become somebody. You feel you have become free. By the expansion of comforts, the outer world possessions, by the expansion of the '*mine*', you experience freedom. However, this is only freedom to choose your sufferings, and not to choose between joy and suffering!

Yes, you have freedom. Of course, if you have money, you can own a top quality car, home and all such things. You can have more choices. Still, these are choices between only suffering and suffering. They are not between suffering and joy.

To have the freedom to choose between suffering and joy comes from dropping the '*mine*' and '*I*'. It does not result from possessing the '*mine*'. Even if you enjoy your possessions, underneath the enjoyment and joy, you have a deep fear. It is the fear, 'when it will be lost.' The possessiveness, the feeling that it is '*mine*', does not let you enjoy. The feeling that it is '*mine*' does not let you enjoy because you have the fear, 'I do not know when it will be lost.' The fear of losing your possessions will not allow you to enjoy those things or relationships.

I have seen that the man who is not possessive enjoys the same object more deeply because he does not fear when he might lose it. The person who continuously possesses it, the person who feels possessiveness, who feels it is '*mine*', will only own it, never enjoy it.

There are two *devatas*, Hindu deities, related to this: Kubera and Lakshmi.

Wealth has two aspects: wealth with possessiveness and wealth without possessiveness. Wealth with possessiveness is Kubera or *yakṣa*. Kubera means the person who possesses and never enjoys. *Yakṣa* is a being that owns wealth, but never enjoys it. He feels so satisfied with possessing that he can never enjoy.

For example, elderly people in the traditional system have everything, but they never enjoy it. I saw a case of this in my village.

An old lady lived a few houses from where I was born and raised. Early in the morning she would call me and tell me to buy her some tobacco leaves. I would ask for some money to pay for it. I was a small boy then. She used to say, 'No, get the money from your father!' My father would give me the money and I would buy the tobacco leaves. I thought that she was a poor lady. So I did not mind buying tobacco leaves for her everyday.

On her property there was a large well. It was so big that even if all the wells in the village were to run dry, her well would have water. She was so possessive of her well that she never allowed anyone to take any water from it. Once, the village doctor needed water for a medical emergency. She refused to give even him water.

Suddenly one day she died. It so happened that the same doctor attended to her on her deathbed. At that time he asked her, 'You didn't give me water. Can you carry that water with you now?' Even at that time she didn't feel that she had made a mistake. She didn't feel that her possessiveness was wrong.

After her funeral, a box was found under her bed that was filled with so much jewelry and money, you can't imagine! That lady *never* enjoyed her wealth.

Such people feel satisfied merely by possessing wealth. When they possess, they feel they are somebody. They feel secure. They have a sense of security when they possess something. Possessiveness never lets you enjoy life. You feel secure only when things are there. For example, the man who possesses continuously counts his money. He feels energized by counting money, not by spending it. He again and again counts his money. After counting it, he hides it under his pillow or under his bed. He never enjoys it. The person who lives with possessiveness is Kubera, a Hindu deity.

Kubera represents richness, whereas another deity, Lakshmi, stands for wealth. Richness means you have but you *never* enjoy. That is Kubera. Wealth means something that not only do you have, but you also enjoy joyously!

Lakshmi means abundance. The abundance or wealth is there without possessiveness. There is no possessiveness, no sense of 'mine, mine, mine'. That feeling is absent. When that feeling is not there, we *really* enjoy. We can *really* live life.

We each decide whether we are a Lakshmi or a Kubera. If we surrender our possessiveness, the feeling of 'mine', we will be continuously joyful, ecstatic and enjoying. If we fear, 'I don't know when it will be taken away,' we will never enjoy.

We work to increase the height of our bed, but we forget to increase the depth of our sleep! If we are possessive about our bed, we never sleep well because we fear that a thief may take it away. We fear we may lose it. When we will lose it, who knows? The underlying fear, the fear underneath our 'mine' never lets us relax. It never allows us to enjoy. If we possess our bed, we never sleep properly. We don't enjoy the relaxed mood! Whenever we drop possessiveness, whenever we relax from the feeling of 'mine', we live even with the material comforts and enjoy life.

Whenever you surrender the 'I' to the Existence, understand this one thing. Never think that the world is running because of you. It is running in spite of you! Fifty years ago none of you was here. Was the world unable to run? It was running perfectly! Fifty years from now, none of us will be here. Do you think the world will stop? No! Even so, we think the whole world is running only because of us.

A traditional proverb from India says, 'The cat thinks that if it closes its eyes, the whole world becomes dark. The cat imagines that if it closes its eyes, the whole world will stop.' That is why when the cat sneaks into the house to steal something it closes its eyes. When the cat drinks milk stealthily, it closes its eyes. It imagines that the whole world has become dark.

Like that cat, you think that the whole world runs because of you. You think, if you close your eyes, the whole world will stop. Never! It never runs because of us. It runs in spite of us.

A small story:

A man wanted to cross a river one day. He was sitting in a boat. The boatman started rowing. After two or three minutes, he shouted to the boatman, 'Hurry up, hurry up.' The boatman put in his best effort. After ten minutes, the man could not contain himself any longer. He started walking

inside the boat, up and down, forward and backward, this side to that side. After half an hour, he started running inside the boat.

The boatman said, 'Keep quiet. Sit silently. Sit! Why are you running back and forth?'

The man replied, 'I must hurry. I cannot sit silently. I need to urgently reach the other shore as soon as possible. I must go quickly!'

If you run inside the boat, will you reach the other shore any earlier? Never. Whether you run or sit, the boat reaches the other shore in its own way and in its own time. By running inside the boat, you never reach your destination any earlier. In fact, you may even delay reaching the other shore.

Ninety percent of our life, we are running inside the boat. Whatever we do is nothing but running inside the boat.

At another time, the man was traveling by train. He was carrying his luggage on his head.

A fellow passenger asked him, 'Why don't you keep the luggage in the luggage compartment?'

The man replied, 'No, that would be too heavy for the train. It will be a burden on the train.'

The man did not realize that the train was carrying his luggage as well as him anyway.

So understand that not only you but your whole 'I' and 'mine' are taken care of by the Divine. It takes care in its own way. But we, out of our ego, keep all our headaches, all the loads, upon our own heads.

Ramana Maharshi, an enlightened saint from India used to beautifully say, 'The train is moving and you are sitting in it. Why don't you put your luggage down and relax? At least you will have time to sleep. You will have time to rest.'

Anyway the train will reach its destination. Whether you carry the luggage on your head or put it down, the train is going to take its own time. Whether you run inside the boat or relax, the boat is going to take its own time.

There is a Zen saying: If you want anything to be done slowly or not done at all, hurry up as much as possible.

By hurrying, you will commit blunders. You may not commit mistakes, but you will commit big blunders.

When you rest, when you really relax, when you surrender at the feet of the Divine, ninety-nine percent of your energy is available for positive creativity. Until then that entire ninety-nine percent is wasted in unnecessarily worrying.

The other day I read a beautiful book called *How to Know God* written by a philosopher. A court of law cannot prove that God exists; yet more than ninety percent of the people believe in the existence of God. Consequently, their creativity improves tremendously. Their life is more joyful and ecstatic. Their life is more flowing. Why? They have stopped spending their energy on worrying. They are creating instead.

Continuous worry creates pressure in your life. When you surrender, when you have faith and trust in the Divine, when you relax in the name of the Divine, the energy that you had been wasting on worrying turns towards creativity and positivity.

Ninety-nine percent of your worries never come true. Whatever one percent comes true is always good for you!

When you surrender your 'I', your suffering is transformed into joy and ecstasy.

When you surrender your 'mine,' your richness becomes wealth.

You start really living with your possessions. You enjoy whatever you have. You start living it, and really feel ecstasy and joy from the things that you have. You go beyond the fear of 'When will I lose them?'

Third: Surrender both I and Mine

When I say both 'I' and 'mine', I mean surrendering your whole life unconditionally.

When you surrender both 'I' and 'mine', your whole life is totally transformed. It becomes completely different. The proof that you have surrendered is that you no longer worry and suffer. If you have really surrendered, you will not have worry or suffering.

To whom you surrender is immaterial. Don't be concerned about that. I have been speaking of surrender but I have not said 'to whom'. There is no need to

bother about to whom to surrender to. It is immaterial whether you surrender to God, the guru, Shiva or Krishna. It is unimportant. It has nothing to do with whom you surrender to. Surrender itself has the power to transform you.

A small story:

A man decided to surrender to a master. Where could he find a master? If he were a modern man, he would have gone on the Internet to see what kinds of masters are available! Of course, in ancient times there were no websites. So where could he go? He went to the forest. He decided, 'I will sit by this road. The first person who comes along will be my guru. I will surrender myself to him.'

Unfortunately, a thief was the first person to come by. This man jumped up and caught hold of the feet of the thief and shouted, 'Oh guru, my master, you are my God. You have come to save me. God, I surrender everything to you. Please take care of me.'

The thief had just robbed the palace and was running away. He feared that the king's soldiers would soon catch up with him. He shouted, 'No, let me go. Let me alone. I am not your guru!'

The man insisted, 'No, you are God! You have come to save me. Please don't say that. Please save me somehow. You are my God, I surrender to you.'

The thief thought, 'What can I do? What kind of a situation is this?'

Finally the thief agreed, 'Alright, I am your guru. Now do as I say. Sit. Close your eyes. Don't open your eyes until I say so.'

The man said, 'Perfectly alright.' He closed his eyes and sat silently. The thief thought, 'Oh, this is the right time!' He ran away and escaped from the man.

The man was sitting all the time. One day passed. Another day passed. His courage, willpower and his decision were so strong, he thought, 'Until my guru returns, I will not open my eyes.'

At that time Shiva appeared in front of him. He gave him *darśan* and said, 'O my son, I am pleased by your surrender. Please open your eyes and ask me for whatever you want.'

Without opening his eyes the man replied, 'No, no, no. You are not my guru. My guru is that man who asked me to sit and close my eyes. When he comes, I will open my eyes. I cannot open my eyes until he comes.'

Shiva said, 'Hey, I am God. I've come down to earth. You don't know it, but that man you consider your guru is actually a thief. I am God and I've come down out of compassion for your sincerity. Open your eyes.'

The man said, 'No, I don't care whether he's a thief or God. I have surrendered to him. You must bring him here.'

Then Shiva assumed the form of the thief and spoke to the man in the thief's voice. Then the man finally opened his eyes.

The story says that Shiva blessed him with spiritual grace.

This story has a beautiful meaning. You don't need to bother about whom you surrender to. That has nothing to do with liberation. Surrendering itself will do the miracle. Surrender has the energy and the capacity to transform you. Don't bother about which form or name you surrender to. It does not matter.

A story from Ramakrishna's parables:

A scholar lived on the banks of the river Yamuna. Everyday a milkmaid supplied him with milk. One day she was late.

The scholar asked, 'Why have you brought the milk so late? How can I follow my regular routine if you come late?'

The maid replied, 'I come from the other side of the river. The river has flooded and no boats could bring me here. That's why I am not on time.'

The scholar casually asked, 'What flood? People even cross the ocean of life by chanting the name of Krishna. Can't you cross a small river?'

The maid was an innocent lady. She was neither very intellectual nor logical. The next day she brought his milk right on time. Everyday she continued to arrive without any delay.

After a week the scholar asked her, 'Now you are coming on time. How? Has the flood receded?'

She replied, 'No, even now the river is flooded. Boats are still not going across. But you taught me that I could cross the river by repeating Krishna's

name. You said I could even cross the ocean of life that way. So that's how I am doing it.'

The scholar was amazed! At first he was unable to believe her. He said, 'How can this be? Come and show me.'

The milkmaid took him to the river and started walking on the river as she chanted, 'Krishna, Krishna, Krishna...'

The scholar thought, 'If she can do this, why not me? Let me try.' He went near the river and lifted his *dhota* (waistcloth), and started saying, 'Krishna, Krishna, Krishna...'

His lips were saying, 'Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,' but at the same time he lifted his cloth so that it would not get wet! Such was his surrender to Krishna! He fell into the river and was carried away by the current.

You can learn one thing from this story: You need not bother about whom you learn from or to whom you surrender. The milkmaid was innocent. She surrendered to the idea given to her by the scholar. You don't need to bother about whom you surrender to, or to whom you offer yourself. The *very* offering has a tremendous power to transform you.

There is no need to worry about what will happen thereafter, or what will be the effect or next step after the surrender. Most of the time, before surrendering itself, we calculate logically, 'After surrendering, what will happen to this or that?' Can we logically calculate what will happen? Never. If we do so, we project our mind beyond surrender.

If you know what will happen after death, only then will you know what will happen after surrender. Surrender and death are the same. When you surrender, psychologically you die. You are re-born. Can you say what will happen after your death? No. In the same way, you can never imagine or visualize what will happen after surrender. If you are imagining, visualizing, be very clear, you are not surrendering.

Someone asked a great master in India, 'Master, how will I know if I have surrendered or not?'

The master replied, 'This question itself will disappear. Then you will know you have surrendered.'

This question, whether you have surrendered or not, will disappear. You will have no doubt about whether you have surrendered or not. Your whole being will be flooded and will be bubbling with ecstasy and joy. There is just a feeling of surrendering, utter relaxation and utter bliss. You will not bother about what happens next. You will be totally relaxed from your duties, pains, suffering and responsibilities. The responsibilities will be fulfilled effortlessly. Your body will be doing the right action effortlessly. Your mind will be doing the right thing without your intervention. It's not that you won't go to your office tomorrow morning because you have surrendered. You will go - the body will carry on. Everything will be happening. But you will see utter relaxation in your being, the utter bliss in your 'mind' and the utter 'IS ness' in your life.

When you surrender the 'I', there is utter bliss. When you surrender the 'mine', there is utter relaxation. When you surrender the 'I' and 'mine', there is a beautiful 'IS ness' in your life. This is the scale to measure whether your surrender is merely lip service or it is real. With this scale you can measure whether you have surrendered or not. *Surrender is nothing but a clear, conscious decision.* Nothing else.

'You will conclude, 'Why can't the energy that can move my body, this sun, this moon and this planet earth, move my life?'

Understand: The bread that we eat becomes blood. It is not an insignificant process. If you are a doctor, you know how big this process is! Bread becoming blood is the biggest industry you can conceive! Still, scientists have not succeeded in converting bread into blood. To be successful in doing this, you need to create an industry that will run for miles. And such a big process happens inside our body! Just six feet high - in such a small system, this big process is happening! Air is taken in, the *prāṇa* (life force) is separated out, the air goes out - the process is happening inside us. If the Divine can manage so much inside our body, if the Divine can manage so much in this universe, it can well manage our life, too.

Understand: Existence *is* intelligence. The Divine *is* intelligence.

I've seen people ask God, 'O God, please give me this. O God, please give me that.'

First, they ask. Next, they bargain! 'If you give me this, I will give you that.' Balaji is the biggest god in India for bargaining with. For anything, bargain with Balaji.

Third, they start blaming God, 'I went to His temple ten times, and every year I climbed up the hill to the temple, but nothing happened!'

First you ask, then you bargain, and next you blame. These three have nothing to do with devotion.

Let me ask you this. Why do you pray? You pray because you think that God has the capacity to give, that God has the *śakti* (power) to give.

When you pray, you ask, 'O God, give me a million dollars.' You know that God has the *śakti* to give you, so you ask.

But when you insist, 'O God, give me now, give me right now,' it means you believe that He has *śakti*, but you don't believe that he has *buddhi*, the intelligence to decide when to give. That is what it means! You believe that he has *śakti*, but you don't believe that he has *buddhi*.

Many people ask me, 'Swamiji, why doesn't God give me what I ask for right now?'

I ask, 'Do you believe that God has the *śakti* to give?'

They say, 'Yes, I believe.'

Then I ask, 'But you don't believe that He has the *buddhi* to know when to give. Am I right?'

They say, 'Yes.'

This is because we don't believe that He has *buddhi*. We believe He has energy, but we don't believe He has intelligence. That is what our prayer means!

When you surrender, you understand that not only does He have *śakti*, He has *buddhi* also. Every moment, something will be taught to you. When you surrender, you will not have any pain. You will feel liberated.

Arjuna's mother, Kunti, was a great lady and was devoted to Krishna. There is a beautiful verse in her prayers, 'O God, let the suffering come from all sides to me to give me the understanding, to give me the experience that You are teaching me through the suffering.'

Every suffering is a teacher who comes to give you more intelligence, more understanding and to open one more dimension of your life. But we never receive anything with an open mind and a sense of welcoming. When you surrender, you accept, you receive everything with a welcoming mood. When you receive your suffering, pain and miseries with a welcoming mood, they become your teachers. They become your masters.

In one of the *Upaniṣads*, Yama, the god of Death, is called a guru. Death is the greatest suffering. If you surrender, if you welcome death, it becomes a great master to you. If you welcome it with a mood of surrender, anything in your life will change its quality. Whenever you resist anything, it will be felt as a devil. Whenever you welcome anything, it will be faced or felt as the Divine.

It is you who decides whether it is the devil or the Divine.

It is not decided on the outside – it is decided inside.

So whenever you relax, you transform your life from *mitya* (illusion) to *nitya ānanda* (eternal bliss). You transform your suffering to a surge of joy. You move from depression to expression, from worrying to wondering. So may you decide consciously. Don't question once the conscious decision is made. Once you surrender, even after the decision, you will have the feeling, you will have the doubt whether you have surrendered or not, whether you really did surrender or not.

Let me tell you one thing.

First just decide to surrender. Surrender everything at the feet of God, at the feet of *Parāśakti* who runs this world. You don't even need to have any name or form in your mind. Don't have my name and form. Don't have any name or form. 'Oh, I surrendered to this god. So what will happen? Will the other god become angry with me?' Don't worry. Just surrender to the energy that runs the whole world. Then everybody is included under that title - God, Divine, energy of this whole universe. Just decide to let this run your life.

After that, naturally, you will have a doubt whether you have surrendered or not. Then just say, 'Even this doubt is a gift from the Divine, the same Divine that is running the world. The Divine gives this doubt also. The intelligence to surrender and to doubt my surrender are both His gifts. Let me offer my doubt also to Him. Let Him take care.' Surrender your doubt also. Then you will see the transformation happens in you just as you are. Don't think, 'First I will change, and then I will surrender.' No. You cannot do that. Surrender as you are, consciously, totally. Whatever is in your hands, whatever 'mine' is in your hands, whatever position is in your hands, surrender completely. Your being will be flooded with a new feeling, a new life, a new energy and a new bliss.

So may you surrender at the feet of the Divine. May you enter. May you be in the energy. May you enter into the divine energy. May this happen to you. May you be in and may you become eternal bliss, *nitya ānanda*. Thank you.

Here ends the ultimate teaching of Krishna and here starts our enlightened life! Let us take a few minutes to offer our gratitude to the great masters. First, offer gratitude to the great master Sri Krishna who showered these great truths upon the whole universe. Let us give our gratitude to Him. Then come all the masters who preserved these truths so that we can enjoy and experience these truths in our life. Let us give our gratitude to the entire *guru parampara*, the lineage of gurus. Please close your eyes and remain in silence for a while.

*Thus ends the eighteenth chapter named **Mokṣa Sanyāsa Yogaḥ** of the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad Gita, the scripture of yoga, dealing with the science of the Absolute in the form of the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna.*

Bhagavad**Gita**

Verses



Invocation Verses

> nmVnŲ à{V~nŲYVnŲ^JdVmZnam Ųā űd`Ų
i`ngā JŲWVnŲnamŲ_ŲZZm_Ų`o_hm^naVŲ
AŲŲm_Ųd{fŲt ^JdVt AŲŲKenŲ`nŲ Zt
Aā~ Ēd_ZngŲXYmŲ_ ^JdXŲrVo^dŲŲfUt

*Om pārthāya pratibodhitām bhagavatā nārāyaṇena svayaṁ
vyāseṇa grahitām purāṇa muninā madhye mahābhārataṁ ।
advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm bhagavatīm aṣṭādaśadhyāyinīm
amba tvāṁ anusandadhāmi bhagavadgīte bhavadveṣiṇīm ॥*

*Om, I meditate upon you, Bhagavad Gita the affectionate Mother, the Divine Mother showering the nectar of non duality and destroying rebirth, (who was) incorporated into the Mahabharata of eighteen chapters by sage Vyasa, the author of the **purāṇas** and imparted to Arjuna by Lord Narayana, Himself.*

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XdŲHŲna_mZYŲHŲŲŲdŲXoŲJŲŲ_²&&

*vasudeva sutaṁ devaṁ kamsa cāṇūra mardanaṁ ।
devakī paramānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vande jagad guruṁ ॥*

I salute you Lord Krishna, Teacher to the world, son of Vasudeva, supreme bliss of Devaki, destroyer of Kamsa and Chaanura

Verses Of Gita Chapter 13

AWĪ`mKēṀ`m`...

j ḁj ḁk{d^mJ`mḁ:

Kṣetra kṣetrajñya Vibhāga Yogaḥ

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àHḡV nēfšMḁ j ḁṣj ḁk_d Mḡ
EVÜQXVĹÀNḡ_ knZškò šM Hēdḡ 1

arjuna uvāca

*prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ cai 'va kṣetraṁ kṣetrajñam eva ca |
etad veditum icchāmi jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ ca keśava || 13.1*

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; *prakṛtiṁ:* nature; *puruṣaṁ:* the enjoyer; *ca:* also; *eva:* certainly; *kṣetraṁ:* body; *kṣetrajñam:* knower of the body; *eva:* certainly; *ca:* also; *etad:* all this; *veditum:* to understand; *icchāmi:* I wish; *jñānaṁ:* knowledge; *jñeyaṁ:* the object of knowledge; *ca:* also; *keśava:* O Krishna.

13.1 Arjuna said: O Krishna, I wish to know and understand about prakṛti and puruṣa, passive and active energies. The field and the knower of the field, and of knowledge and of the end of knowledge.

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EVÜmdḡm Všānhp j ḁk B{V V{ÜX:ḡ 1

śrī bhagavān uvāca

*idam śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetram ityabhidhīyate |
etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña iti tadvidaḥ || 13.2*

śrī bhagavān uvāca: the personality of godhead said; idam: this; śarīrām: body; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; kṣetram: the field; iti: thus; abhidhīyate: is called; etat: this; yaḥ: anyone; vetti: knows; taṁ: he; prāhuḥ: is called; kṣetrajñā: knower of the body; iti: thus; tadvidaḥ: one who knows

13.2 Lord Krishna replies to Arjuna saying: This body, O son of Kunti, is called the field, anyone who knows this body is called the knower of the field.

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kṣetrajñāṁ cā 'pi mām viddhi sarva kṣetreṣu bhārata |
kṣetra kṣetrajñayor jñānaṁ yat tat jñānaṁ mataṁ mama || 13.3

kṣetrajñāṁ: the knower; ca: also; api: certainly; mām: Me; viddhi: know; sarva: all; kṣetreṣu: in bodily fields; bhārata: O son of Bharata; kṣetra: field of activities (the body); kṣetrajñayoḥ: the knower of the field; jñānaṁ: knowledge; yat: that which is taught; tat: that; jñānaṁ: knowledge; mataṁ: opinion; mama: that

13.3 O Bharata, know that I am the Knower in all bodies, the witness. In my opinion knowledge means the understanding of this body or the field of activity as well as the Knower of this field.

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tat kṣetraṁ yac ca yādṛk ca yadvikāri yataś ca yat |
sa ca yo yat prabhāvaś ca tat samāsena me sṛṇu || 13.4

tat: that; kṣetraṁ: field of activities; yat: as; ca: and; yādṛk: as it is; ca: and; yat: what is; vikāri: changes; yataḥ: from which; ca: and; yat: which; sa: he; ca: also; yaḥ: one; yat: which; prabhāvaś ca: influence also; tat: that; samāsena: in summary; me: from Me; sṛṇu: understand

13.4 Understand my summary of this field of activity and how it is constituted, what its changes are, how it is produced, who that knower of the field of activities is, and what his influences are.

Ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītāṁ chandobhir vividhaiḥ prthak |
brahmasūtrapadais ca 'va hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ || 13.5

ṛṣibhir: by the wise sages; bahudhā: in many ways; gītāṁ: described; chandobhiḥ: Vedic hymns; vividhaiḥ: in various; prthak: variously; brahmasūtra: the Vedanta; padaiḥ: aphorisms; ca: also; eva: certainly; hetumadbhir: with cause and effect; viniścitaiḥ: ascertain

13.5 That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages with chants in the scriptures It is presented with all reasoning as to cause and effect.

mahābhūtāny ahaṅkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca |
indriyāṇi daśai 'kaṁ ca pañca ce 'ndriyagocarāḥ || 13.6

*mahābhūtāny ahaṅkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca |
indriyāṇi daśai 'kaṁ ca pañca ce 'ndriyagocarāḥ || 13.6*

icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṅghātāś cetanā dhr̥tiḥ |
etat kṣetraṁ samāśena savikāram udāhṛtam || 13.7

*icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ saṅghātāś cetanā dhr̥tiḥ |
etat kṣetraṁ samāśena savikāram udāhṛtam || 13.7*

mahābhūtāni: great elements; *ahaṅkāraḥ*: ego; *buddhiḥ*: intelligence; *avyaktam*: the unmanifested; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also; *indriyāṇi*: senses; *daśai 'kaṁ*: eleven; *ca*: also; *pañca*: five; *ca*: also; *indriyagocarāḥ*: objects of the senses; *icchā*: desire; *dveṣaḥ*: hatred; *sukhaṁ*: happiness; *duḥkhaṁ*: distress; *saṅghātaḥ*: the aggregate; *cetanā*: living symptoms; *dhṛtiḥ*: conviction; *etat*: all this; *kṣetraṁ*: the field of activities; *samāśena*: in summary; *savikāram*: interaction; *udāhṛtam*: exemplified

13.6,7 The field of activities and its interactions are said to be: the five elements of nature, ego, intelligence, the mind, the formless, the ten senses of perception and action, as well as the five objects of senses and desire, hatred, happiness, distress, the aggregate, the life symptoms, and convictions.

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amānitvam adambhitvam ahimsā kṣāntir ārjavam |
ācāryopāśanam śaucaṁ sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ || 13.8

amānitvam: humility; *adambhitvam*: pridelessness; *ahimsā*: nonviolence; *kṣāntiḥ*: tolerance; *ārjavam*: simplicity; *ācāryopāśanam*: approaching a bona fide spiritual master; *śaucaṁ*: cleanliness; *sthairyam*: steadfastness; *ātmavinigrahaḥ*: control

BpīD` nVfwdanīz_Zh' & Ed M&
OY__E` Dām` mYXwI XnfnZkeZ_&& 8

indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam anahaṁkāra eva ca |
janma mṛtyu jarā vyādhi duḥkha doṣānudarśanam || 13.9

indriyārtheṣu: in the matter of the senses; *vairāgyam*: renunciation; *anahaṁkāra*: being without egoism; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also; *janma*: birth; *mṛtyu*: death; *jarā*: old age; *vyādhi*: disease; *duḥkha*: distress; *doṣa*: fault; *anudarśanam*: observing

Ag{°\$Z{^id": nñXmaJñmXfñ
{ZÈ`\$M_g_{MñEd{`iñZimn{Inñ& 9

asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra dāra grhādiṣu |
nityaṁ ca samacittatvam iṣṭāniṣtopapattiṣu || 13.10

asaktiḥ: without attachment; *anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ*: without association; *putra*: sons; *dāra*: wife; *grhādiṣu*: home, etc.; *nityaṁ*: eternal; *ca*: also; *samacittatvam*: equilibrium; *iṣṭā*: desirable; *aniṣṭa*: undesirable; *upapattiṣu*: having obtained

_` MnZY` `mñZ ^{°\$aì` {^MñJaUrY`&
{d{d°\$Xeg{dEd_a{VOZgg{Xñ& 10

mayi cā 'nanyayogena bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī |
vivikta deśa sevītvam aratir janasaṁsadi || 13.11

mayi: unto Me; *ca*: also; *ananyayogena*: by devotional service; *bhaktiḥ*: devotion; *avyabhicāriṇī*: constant, unalloyed; *vivikta*: solitary; *deśa*: place; *sevītvam*: aspiring; *aratiḥ*: without attachment; *jana*: to people in general; *saṁsadi*: mass

AÜ` nñ_knZ{ZÈ`Ed\$VñdknZñVñeZ`_ñ
EVÁknZ{`V`ññP\$`knZ\$`XVñññ`Wññ& 11

adhyātma jñāna nityatvaṁ tattva jñānārtha darśanam |
etaḥ jñānam iti proktam ajñānaṁ yadato 'nyathā || 13.12

adhyātma: pertaining to the self; *jñāna*: knowledge; *nityatvaṁ*: eternity; *tattva jñānā*: knowledge of the truth; *artha*: the object; *darśanam*: philosophy; *etaḥ*: all this; *jñānam*: knowledge; *iti*: thus; *proktam*: declared; *ajñānaṁ*: ignorance; *yat*: that which; *ataḥ*: from this; *anyathā*: others

13.8,9,10,11,12 Humility, absence of pride, nonviolence, tolerance, simplicity, service to an enlightened spiritual master, cleanliness, steadiness and self-control; renunciation of the objects of sense gratification; absence of ego, the perception of the pain of the cycle of birth and death, old age and disease; nonattachment to children, wife, home and the rest and even-mindedness amid

pleasant and unpleasant events; constant and unalloyed devotion to Me, resorting to solitary places, detachment from the general mass of people; accepting the importance of self realization, and philosophical search for the absolute truth: All these I thus declare to be knowledge and anything contrary to these is ignorance.

kò\$`ÎñĀdú`mġ`ĀknĒdm`V`îZwĪk
AZmX_Ēna\$~€ Z gĪnpngXĀ`VĪk 12

*jñeyam yat tat pravakṣyāmi yaj jñātvā 'mṛtam aśnute |
anādimat param brahma na sat tan nā 'sad ucyate || 13.13*

jñeyam: knowable; *yat*: that; *tat*: which; *pravakṣyāmi*: I shall now explain; *yaj*: which; *jñātvā*: knowing; *mṛtam*: nectar; *aśnute*: taste; *anādi*: beginningless; *mat param*: subordinate to Me; *brahma*: spirit; *na*: neither; *sat*: cause; *tat*: that; *nā*: nor; *asad*: effect; *ucyate*: is called

13.13 *I shall fully give you the understanding about the knowable with which one can taste eternal bliss or the being or the consciousness that has no beginning. A life beyond the law of cause, effect and the material world.*

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gdV: I V_ \$, nbt\$ gdmdĒ` {Vd\$VĪk 13

*sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṁ tat sarvato 'kṣiśiromukham |
sarvataḥ śrutimal loke sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati || 13.14*

sarvataḥ: everywhere; *pāṇi*: hands; *pādaṁ*: legs; *tat*: that; *sarvataḥ*: everywhere; *akṣi*: eyes; *śiro*: head; *mukham*: face; *sarvataḥ*: everywhere; *śrutimat*: hearing; *loke*: in the world; *sarvam*: everything; *āvṛtya*: covering; *tiṣṭhati*: exists

13.14 *With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the worlds, enveloping all. The Paramātman (supreme spirit) is all pervading.*

gdh̐D` JUm^ng\$gdh̐D` {dd{Ov_&
Ag°\$gd°f̐p {ZJ@JUm^nsV\$ M&& 14

sarvendriya guṇābhāsaṁ sarvendriya vivarjitam ।
asaktaṁ sarvabhṛccai 'va nirguṇaṁ guṇabhoktr ca ॥ 13.15

sarva: all; indriya: senses; guṇa: qualities; ābhāsaṁ: original source; sarva: all; indriya: senses; vivarjitam: being without; asaktaṁ: without attachment; sarvabhṛt: maintainer of everyone; ca: also; eva: certainly; nirguṇaṁ: without material qualities; guṇabhoktr: simultaneously master of the gunas; ca: also

13.15 The Paramātmā is the original source of all the senses. Yet, He is beyond all the senses. He is unattached. Although the consciousness is the maintainer of all the living beings, yet He transcends the modes of the nature and at the same time He is the master of the modes of our material nature.

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gü_Ēdm̐K{dkô \$XpñW\$Mm̐VHô M VV&& 16

bahir antaś ca bhūtānām acaraṁ caram eva ca ।
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṁ dūraṣṭhaṁ cā 'ntike ca tat ॥ 13.16

bahih̐: outside; antaḥ: inside; ca: also; bhūtānām: of all living entities; acaraṁ: not moving; caram: moving; eva: also; ca: and; sūkṣmatvāt: on account of being subtle; tat: that; avijñeyaṁ: unknowable; dūraṣṭhaṁ: far away; ca: also; antike: near; ca: and; tat: that

13.16 The supreme truth exists both within and without, it is present in everything mobile or immobile. It is not knowable through the senses as it is very subtle. Though far, yet it is the nearest.

A{d^°\$M ^v̐f̐w{d^°\$_d M pñWV_&
^v̐^V̐M VĀkô \$J{gîUwà^{dîUwM&& 16

avibhaktaṁ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam ।
bhūta bhartṛ ca taj jñeyaṁ grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca ॥ 13.17

avibhaktam: without division; *ca*: also; *bhūteṣu*: in every living being; *vibhaktam*: divided; *iva*: as if; *ca*: also; *sthitam*: situated; *bhūta bhartṛ*: maintainer of all living entities; *ca*: also; *tat*: that; *jñeyam*: to be understood; *grasiṣṇu*: devours; *prabhaviṣṇu*: develops; *ca*: also

13.17 *Though appearing fragmented it is indivisible whole. Though He is the maintainer of every living entity, it is to be understood that He consumes and creates all.*

Ā`nVfm_{n VĀĀ`nVnV_g: na_Ā`VĀ
knZ\$skō \$knZJā`\$ō{X gdf{ {d{ōV_17

jyotiṣām api taj jyotis tamasaḥ param ucyate |
 jñānam jñeyam jñānagamyam hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam || 13.18

jyotiṣām: in all luminous objects; *api*: also; *tat*: that; *jyotiḥ*: source of light; *tamasaḥ*: of the darkness; *param*: beyond; *ucyate*: is said; *jñānam*: knowledge; *jñeyam*: to be known; *jñānagamyam*: to be approached by knowledge; *hṛdi*: in the heart; *sarvasya*: of everyone; *viṣṭhitam*: situated

13.18 *He is the source of light in all luminous objects. He is beyond the darkness of matter and is formless. He is knowledge, He is the object of knowledge, and He is the goal of knowledge. He is situated in everyone's heart.*

B{V j d\$VWm knZ\$skō \$Mn\$ g_ngV:18
_0°\$ EV{Ükm _0mdm nnnÜV18

iti kṣetram tathā jñānam jñeyam co 'ktam samāsataḥ |
 madbhakta etad vijñāya madbhāvāyo 'papadyate || 13.19

iti: thus; *kṣetram*: the field of activities (the body); *tathā*: also; *jñānam*: knowledge; *jñeyam*: the knowable; *ca*: also; *uktam*: described; *samāsataḥ*: in summary; *madbhakaḥ*: My devotee; *etad*: all this; *vijñāya*: after understanding; *madbhāvāya*: My nature; *upapadyate*: attains

13.19 *Thus the field of activities, knowledge and the knowable has been summarily described by Me. It is only when we can understand the true nature of our supreme Self and the material world with which we have created false identities that we can go beyond this and attain the supreme Self itself.*

àHqV nief\$Mpd {dÖ` ZnKr C^md{n&
{dH\$an\$ü JwJn\$üpd {d{Ö àHqVg\$dmZ&& 19

prakṛtiṃ puruṣam cai 'va viddhyanādī ubhāvapi |
vikārāmś ca guṇāmś cai 'va viddhi prakṛtisambhavān || 13.20

prakṛtiṃ: material nature; *puruṣam*: living entity; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *viddhi*: must know; *anādī*: without beginning; *ubhāu*: both; *api*: also; *vikārām*: transformations; *ca*: also; *guṇām*: three modes of nature; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *viddhi*: know; *prakṛti*: material nature; *sambhavān*: produced of

13.20 **Prakṛti** or the field and its attributes and the **puruṣa** or the knower or the supreme consciousness are both without beginning. All the transformations of nature that we see are produced by the field or **prakṛti**.

H\$ñ P\$maUH\$VEdohw/ àHqVéÀ`V&
nief: gw Xwl mZn\$^m\$EdohVéÀ`V&& 20

kārya kāraṇa kartṛtve hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate |
puruṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhānām bhokṛtve hetuḥ ucyate || 13.21

kārya: effect; *kāraṇa*: cause; *kartṛtve*: in the matter of creation; *hetuḥ*: instrument; *prakṛtiḥ*: material nature; *ucyate*: is said to be; *puruṣaḥ*: the living entity; *sukha*: of happiness; *duḥkhānām*: and distress; *bhokṛtve*: in enjoyment; *hetuḥ*: the instrument; *ucyate*: is said to be

13.21 *In the production of the body and the senses, prakṛti is said to be the cause; In the experience of pleasure and pain, puruṣa is said to be the cause.*

néf: àH\$VñWno{h ^L\$SaH\$VOnYJUnZ&
H\$naU\$JWg"nēñ` gXgÚmZOY_gñ& 21

puruṣaha prakṛtistho hi bhuñkte prakṛtijān guṇān |
kāraṇaṁ guṇasaṅgo 'sya sad asad yoni janmasu || 13.22

puruṣaha: the living entity; *prakṛtisthaḥ*: being situated in the material energy; *hi*: certainly; *bhuñkte*: enjoys; *prakṛtijān*: produced by the material nature; *guṇān*: modes of nature; *kāraṇaṁ*: cause; *guṇasaṅgaḥ*: association with the modes of nature; *asya*: of the living entity; *sad asad*: good and bad; *yoni*: species of life; *janmasu*: birth

13.22 The living entity in the material nature follows the way of life, enjoying the moods of nature. Due to association with the material nature it meets the good or evil among various species.

CnĐ'iñZwYVmM ^VmP^ñP\$ñ_hoea:~
na_nē_Ŵ MñB`P\$ñXñepñ_Yñēf: na:~& 23Y

upadraṣṭā 'numantā ca bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ |
paramātme 'ti cā 'pyukto dehe 'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ || 13.23

upadraṣṭā: overseer; *anumantā*: permitter; *ca*: also; *bhartā*: master; *bhoktā*: supreme enjoyer; *maheśvaraḥ*: the supreme Lord; *paramātmā*: supersoul; *iti*: also; *ca*: and; *apyuktaḥ*: is said; *dehe*: in this body; *asmin*: this; *puruṣaḥ*: enjoyer; *paraḥ*: transcendental

13.23 Yet, in this body there is a transcendental energy. He who is divine, who exists as a owner or the witness, supporter, enjoyer and the pure witnessing consciousness, is known as the Paramātmā.

` Ed\$đōlmnéf\$āH\$V M JW; gh&
gdWmdV_mZñe{n Z g ^yñe{^Om`Vñ& 24

ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha |
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi na sa bhūyo 'bhijāyate || 13.24

yaḥ: anyone; *evam*: thus; *vetti*: understands; *puruṣaṁ*: the living entity; *prakṛtiṁ*: material nature; *ca*: and; *guṇaiḥ*: modes of material nature; *saha*: with; *sarvathā*: by all means; *vartamānaḥ*: situated; *api*: in spite of; *na*: never; *sa*: he; *bhūyaḥ*: again; *abhijāyate*: takes his birth

13.24 One who understands this philosophy concerning material nature, the living entity and the interaction of the modes of nature is sure to attain liberation. He will not take birth here again, regardless of his present position.

Ü`nZzñē_Z nī`pV HqMXñē_nZ_nē_Zñē
AÝ`ogmL»`z`mōz H\$`mōz Mmañē 25Ý

dhyānenā 'tmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā |
anye sāṅkhyena yogena karmayogena cā 'pare || 13.25

dhyānena: by meditation; *ātmani*: self; *paśyanti*: see; *kecit*: one; *ātmānam*: Supersoul; *ātmanā*: by the mind; *anye*: others; *sāṅkhyena*: by philosophical discussion; *yogena*: by the yoga system; *karmayogena*: by activities without fruitive desire; *ca*: also; *apare*: others

13.25 Some perceive the Paramātmā in their inner psyche through mind and intellect that have been purified by meditation or by metaphysical knowledge or by karma yoga.

AÝ`oEdol_OnZÝV: Iñdm`ä`CnmgVñē
Vñ{n MmVñVñē`ol`_ñ`ñIññam`Umñē 26

anye tvevam ajānantaḥ śrutvā 'nyebhya upāsate |
te 'pi 'cātitaranty eva mṛtyuṁ śrutiparāyaṇāḥ || 13.26

anye: others; *tu*: but; *evam*: thus; *ajānantaḥ*: without spiritual knowledge; *śrutvā*: by hearing; *anyebhyaḥ*: from others; *upāsate*: begin to worship; *te*: they; *api*: also; *ca*: and; *atitaranti*: transcend; *eva*: certainly; *mṛtyuṁ*: the path of death; *śrutiparāyaṇāḥ*: inclined to the process of hearing

13.26 *There are those who, although not conversant in spiritual knowledge, begin to worship the supreme personality upon hearing about Him from others. Through the process of hearing about the supreme Self, they also transcend the path of birth and death.*

mdEgÄOm Vo{H\$#mVgîd\$ñWmdaO"__&
j ð j ð kg\$ mîmîŮ{Ů ^aVf®&& 27

yāvat saṁjāyate kimcit sattvaṁ sthāvara jaṅgamam ।
kṣetrakṣetrajña saṁyogāt tad viddhi bharatarsabha ॥ 13.27

yāvat: whatever; *saṃjāyāte*: takes place; *kimcit*: anything; *sattvaṃ*: existence; *sthāvara*: not moving; *jaṅgamam*: moving; *kṣetra*: the body; *kṣetrajña*: knower of the body; *saṃyogāt*: union between; *tad viddhi*: you must know it; *bharatarṣabha*: O chief of the Bharatas

13.27 Bharata, know that whatever that is movable or immovable is born, It comes into existence by combination of **ksetra** and **ksetrajñya**

g_sgdFw^VfW(VÖV\$na_oea_&
{dZî` Ēnd{dZî` V\$` : nî` {V g nî` {V&& 28

samañ sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhantañ parameśvaram ।
vinaśyatsvavinaśyantañ yah paśyati sa paśyati ॥ 13.28

samān: equally; *sarveṣu*: in all; *bhūteṣu*: living entities; *tiṣṭhantaṁ*: residing; *parameśvaram*: the supersoul; *vinaśyatṣu*: in the destructible; *avinaśyantaṁ* : not destroyed; *yaḥ*: anyone; *paśyati*: sees; *sah*: he; *paśyati*: actually sees

13.28 *One who sees the supreme Spirit accompanying the individual soul in all bodies, who understands that neither the individual soul nor the supreme Spirit is ever destroyed, actually sees.*

g_śnī` pīh gdṛ g_dpīVV_reea_॥
Z {hZñē` nē_Zñē_mZ\$VVm` mV nan\$J{V_॥ 29ṽ

samaṁ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram ।
na hinasty ātmanā 'tmanam tato yāti parām gatim ॥ 13.29

samaṁ: equally; *paśyan*: seeing; *hi*: certainly; *sarvatra*: everywhere; *samavasthitam*: equally situated; *īśvaram*: Supersoul; *na*: does not; *hinasti*: degrade; *ātmanā*: by the mind; *atmanam*: the soul; *tato yāti*: then reaches; *parām*: the transcendental; *gatim*: destination

13.29 *When one does not get degraded or influenced by the mind and when he can see the supreme Spirit in all living and non-living things, One reaches the transcendental destination.*

āHñē` p M H\$_mU {H\$ _mUmZ gdē:॥
` : nī` {V VVñē_mZ_H\$Vn\$g nī` {V_ 30ṽ

prakṛtyai 'va ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ ।
yaḥ paśyati tathā 'tmānam akartāraṁ sa paśyati ॥ 13.30

prakṛtyā: by material nature; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also; *karmāṇi*: activities; *kriyamāṇāni*: engaged in performing; *sarvaśaḥ*: in all respects; *yaḥ*: anyone who; *paśyati*: sees; *tathā*: so also; *atmānam*: himself; *akartāraṁ*: non-doer; *sa*: he; *paśyati*: sees perfectly

13.30 *One who can see that all activities are performed by the body, which is created of material nature, sees that the Self does nothing, actually sees.*

`Xm ^jVnW/2nd_btñW_Zmī` {V_॥
VV Ed M {dñVn\$~<- gānÚVoVXnñ_ 31

yadā bhūtaprthagbhāvam ekastham anupaśyati ।
tata eva ca vistāraṁ brahma saṁpadyate tadā ॥ 13.31

yadā: when; bhūta: living entities; prthagbhāvam: separated identities; ekastham: situated in one; anupaśyati: tries to see through authority; tata eva: thereafter; ca: also; vistāram: expanded; brahma: the Absolute; saṁpadyate: attains; tadā: at that time

13.31 When a person can see the supreme Self in all living entities then he will cease to see the separateness among the living entities. He will see that the whole universe is an expansion and expression of the same truth.

ANāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ |
śarīrastho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate || 13.32

anāditvān nirguṇatvāt paramātmāyam avyayaḥ |
śarīrastho 'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate || 13.32

anāditvāt: due to eternity; nirguṇatvāt: due to transcendental; parama: beyond material nature; ātmā: spirit; ayam: this; avyayaḥ: inexhaustible; śarīrastho 'pi: though dwelling in the body; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; na karoti: never does anything; na lipyate: nor is he entangled

13.32 Those with the vision of eternity can see that the soul is transcendental, eternal, and beyond the modes of nature. Despite contact with the material body, O Arjuna, the soul neither does anything nor is attached.

yathā sarvagatam saukṣmyād ākāśam na 'palipyate |
sarvatrā 'vasthito dehe tathā 'tmā no 'palipyate || 13.33

yathā sarvagatam saukṣmyād ākāśam na 'palipyate |
sarvatrā 'vasthito dehe tathā 'tmā no 'palipyate || 13.33

yathā: as; sarvagatam: all-pervading; saukṣmyād: due to being subtle; ākāśam: the sky; na: never; upalipyate: mixes; sarvatra: everywhere; avasthitaḥ: situated; dehe: in the body; tathā: such; ātmā: the self; na: never; upalipyate: mixes.

13.33 *The sky, due to its subtle nature, does not mix with anything, although it is all pervading. Similarly, the soul, situated in Brahman, does not mix with the body, though situated in that body.*

WmH\$me`E`H\$: H\$Eg\$bnH\$_\$a(d:V
j d\$ j d r VWmH\$Vò\$àH\$me`{V ^naV& 34Y

yathā prakāśayatyekaḥ kṛtsnaṁ lokam imaṁ raviḥ ।
ksetraṁ ksetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ prakāśayati bhārata ॥ 13.34

yathā: as; *prakāśayati*: illumines; *ekaḥ*: one; *kṛtsnam*: the whole; *lokam*: universe; *imam*: this; *raviḥ*: the sun; *kṣetram*: this body; *kṣetrī*: the soul; *tathā*: similarly; *kṛtsnam*: all; *prakāśayati*: illumines; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata

13.34 O son of Bharata, as the Sun alone illumines the universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illumines the consciousness.

j d j d k` mod`YVa\$kmZMj fmi&
^VàH\$V`ni \$M`o{dXiù n\$V Vona`Y& 35

kṣetra kṣetrajñayor evam antaram jñāna cakṣuṣā ।
bhūtaprakṛti mokṣam ca ye vidur yānti te param ॥ 13.35

kṣetra: body; *kṣetrajñayoh*: of the proprietor of the body; *evam*: that; *antaram*: difference; *jñāna cakṣuṣā*: by vision of knowledge; *bhūta*: living entity; *prakṛti*: material nature; *mokṣam*: liberation; *ca*: also; *ye*: one who; *viduḥ*: knows; *yānti*: approaches; *te*: they; *param*: supreme

13.35 *Those, who see with the eyes of knowledge the difference between the body-mind and the knower of the body-mind, can understand the process. Are liberated from the bondages of the material nature and attain the Paramātman.*

B(V I r_ØJd0rVngn(ZfEgw~«-{dÚmì n\$`nlemóo
I rH\$UnOg\$inKoj ðj ðk{d^m`nlnZm_ Ì`nenj`mì : V&

*iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre ।
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde kṣetra kṣetrajña vibhāga yogo nāma trayodaśo 'dhyāyaḥ ॥*

*In the **Upaniṣad** of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of **Brahman**, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the thirteenth discourse designated:*

Kṣetra kṣetrajña Vibhāga Yogaḥ

Verses Of Gita Chapter 14

AWMVKEmpU`m`...

JUJl`{d^mJ`mJ...

Guṇatraya Vibhāga Yogaḥ

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na\$^y` : àdú` m_ kmZnZn\$kmZ_ilm_&

`Áknēdm_ĩ` : gd}nan\$g{g{Ō{ VmJVm&& 1

śrī bhagavān uvāca

*paraṁ bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam ।
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhim ito gatāḥ ॥ 14.1*

śrī bhagavān uvāca: Krishna said; *paraṁ:* supreme; *bhūyaḥ:* again; *pravakṣyāmi:* I shall speak; *jñānānām:* of all knowledge; *jñānam:* knowledge; *uttamam:* the supreme; *yaj:* which; *jñātvā:* knowing; *munayaḥ:* the sages; *sarve:* all; *parāṁ:* supreme; *siddhim:* perfection; *itaḥ:* from this world; *gatāḥ:* attained

14.1 Krishna says, 'I will declare to you again the supreme wisdom, The knowledge of which has helped all sages attain supreme perfection.'

BX\$kmZ_mnI Ē` __ gmYā` ©mJVm&

gJ}n ZnmOm`YVoàb`oZ i`WfYV M&& 2

idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharmaṁ āgatāḥ ।

sarge 'pi no 'pajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca ॥ 14.2

idaṁ: this; *jñānam:* knowledge; *upāśritya:* taking shelter of; *mama:* My; *sādharmyam:* nature; *āgatāḥ:* attained; *sarge 'pi:* even in the creation; *na:* never; *upajāyante:* comes in; *pralaye:* in the annihilation; *na:* nor; *vyathanti:* disturbed; *ca:* also

14.2 By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain the transcendental nature, like my own, and establish in his eternal consciousness, that one is not born at the time of creation, or disturbed at the time of dissolution.

__`mZ_8xVpñ_YJ^aXYmā`h_8
g\$^d: gd^ymZn\$VVm^d{V^maV8& 3

*mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham I
sambhavaḥ sarvabhūtanām tato bhavati bhārata II 14.3*

mama: My; *yonih*: source of birth; *mahat brahma*: material cause of the entire creation called mahat brahma; *tasmin*: in that; *garbham*: pregnancy; *dadhāmi*: create; *aham*: I; *sambhavaḥ*: possibility; *sarvabhūtanām*: of all living entities; *tataḥ*: thereafter; *bhavati*: becomes; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata

14.3 The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth, It is that Brahman that I impregnate, making possible the births of all living beings, O son of Bharata.

gd^m(ZfwH\$yVö _y/©: gā^dpI/V`m8
Vngn\$~_hÚmZah\$~rOàX: {nVn8& 4

*sarva yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ I
tāsām brahma mahad yonir aham bījapradāḥ pitā II 14.4*

sarva yoniṣu: in all species of life; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *mūrtayaḥ*: forms; *sambhavanti*: as they appear; *yāḥ*: which; *tāsām*: all of them; *brahma*: supreme; *mahad yonih*: the source of birth in the material substance; *aham*: Myself; *bījapradāḥ*: seed-giving; *pitā*: father

14.4 Arjuna, understand that all species of life are made possible by birth in this material nature, and I am the seed-giving father.

gId\$aoñV_ B{V Jm àH\$Vg\$dm8
{Z~ÜZpI/V_hm-nhnoXboXqhZ_ì`_8& 5

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛtisambhavāḥ I
nibadhnanti mahābāho dehe dehinam avyayam II 14.5*

sattvaṁ: mode of goodness; *rajaḥ*: mode of passion; *tamaḥ*: mode of ignorance; *iti*: thus; *guṇāḥ*: qualities; *prakṛti*: material nature; *sambhavāḥ*: produced of; *nibadhnāti*: does condition; *mahābāho*: O mighty-armed one; *dehe*: in this body; *dehinam*: the living entity; *avyayam*: eternal

14.5 Material nature consists of the three modes—goodness, passion and ignorance. When the living entity comes in contact with nature, it becomes conditioned by these modes.

VÎ gÎd\$Z_@EdnēK\$neH\$Zm_`_&
g† g"z ~ÜZmV knZg\$z MnZKŸ && 6

tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam |
sukha saṅgena badhnāti jñānasaṅgena cā 'nagha || 14.6

tatra: thereafter; *sattvaṁ*: mode of goodness; *nirmalatvāt*: being purest in the material world; *prakāśakam*: illuminating; *anāmayam*: without any sinful reaction; *sukha*: happiness; *saṅgena*: association; *badhnāti*: conditions; *jñāna*: knowledge; *saṅgena*: association; *cā*: also; *anagha*: O sinless one

14.6 O sinless One, the mode of goodness, satva, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in that mode develop knowledge, but they become conditioned by the concept of happiness.

aOmamJnē_H\$ {d{Ö VŸUmg" g_Ød_&
V{p~ÜZmV H\$ŸVô H\$_g"z XqñZ_&& 7

rajo rāgātmakam viddhi tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam |
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karmasaṅgena dehinam || 14.7

rajaḥ: the mode of passion; *rāgātmakam*: born of desire or lust; *viddhi*: know; *tṛṣṇā*: with craving; *saṅga*: association; *samudbhavam*: produced of; *tan*: that; *nibadhnāti*: binds; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *karmasaṅgena*: by association with fruitive activity; *dehinam*: the embodied

14.7 Arjuna, know that the mode of passion, rajas, is characterized by intense craving and is the source of desire and attachment. Rajas binds the living entity by attachment to work.

V_nĒdkmZOS{d{Ö _nmZsgdXqhZm_ 8
à_nKmbñ`{ZDm{^ñV{p~ÜZm{V ^naV 8

*tamas tvajñānajaṁ viddhi mohanaṁ sarvadehinām ।
pramādālasya nidrābhis tan nibadhnāti bhārata ॥ 14.8*

tamaḥ: mode of ignorance; *tu*: but; *ajñānajaṁ*: products of ignorance; *viddhi*: knowing; *mohanaṁ*: delusion; *sarvadehinām*: of all embodied beings; *pramāda*: madness; *ālasya*: indolence; *nidrābhiḥ*: sleep; *tan*: that; *nibadhnāti*: binds; *bhārata* : O son of Bharata

14.8 Know, O Arjuna, that the mode of ignorance, *tamas*, the deluder of the living entity is born of inertia. Tamas binds the living entity by carelessness, laziness, and excessive sleep.

gĪd\$gwl ogÄO`{V aO: H\$ _PU ^naV 8
kmZ_mclĒ` VwV_: à_nKogÄO`Ē`W 9

*sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata ।
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayatyuta ॥ 14.9*

sattvaṁ: mode of goodness; *sukhe*: in happiness; *sañjayati*: develops; *rajaḥ*: mode of passion; *karmaṇi*: fruits of activities; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata; *jñānam*: knowledge; *āvṛtya*: covering; *tu*: but; *tamaḥ*: the mode of ignorance; *pramāde*: in madness; *sañjayati*: develops; *uta*: it is said

14.9 The mode of goodness conditions one to happiness, passion conditions him to fruits of action, and veiling the knowledge, *tamas* binds one to carelessness.

aOñV_ümq^y gÎd\$^d{V ^mVk
aO: gÎd\$V_üpd V_: gÎd\$aOñVWm& 10

*rajaṣ tamaś cā 'bhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata /
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaś cai 'va tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā || 14.10*

rajaḥ: mode of passion; *tamaḥ*: mode of ignorance; *ca*: also; *abhibhūya*: also surpassing; *sattvaṁ*: mode of goodness; *bhavati*: becomes prominent; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata; *rajaḥ*: mode of passion; *sattvaṁ*: mode of goodness; *tamaḥ*: mode of ignorance; *ca*: also; *eva*: like that; *tamaḥ*: mode of ignorance; *sattvaṁ*: mode of goodness; *rajaḥ*: mode of passion; *tathā*: as in this

14.10 Sometimes the mode of passion becomes prominent, defeating the mode of goodness, O son of Bharata. And sometimes the mode of goodness defeats passion, and at other times the mode of ignorance defeats goodness and passion. In this way there is always competition for supremacy.

gdñmofwXhepñ_YâH\$ne CnOm`Vik
knZ\$`XmVXm{dUm{UdD\$gÎd{E`W& 11

*sarvādvāreṣu dehe 'smin prakāśa upajāyate /
jñānaṁ yadā tadā vidyād vivṛddhaṁ sattvaṁ iti uta || 14.11*

sarvādvāreṣu: all the gates; *dehe 'smin*: in this body; *prakāśaḥ*: quality of illumines; *upajāyate*: develops; *jñānaṁ*: knowledge; *yadā*: when; *tadā*: at that time; *vidyāt*: must know; *vivṛddhaṁ*: increased; *sattvaṁ*: the mode of goodness; *iti*: thus; *uta*: said

14.11 When the light of Self-knowledge illumines all the senses (or gates) in the body, then it should be known that goodness is predominant.

bm^: àd{fīnanaâ^: H\$_Um_e_: ññkñk
aOñ`WmqZ Om`Vo{ddD^aVf^ 12

*lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ sprhā /
rajasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha || 14.12*

lobhaḥ: greed; *pravṛttiḥ*: hankering; *ārambhaḥ*: endeavor; *karmaṇām*: of activities; *aśamaḥ*: uncontrollable; *spṛhā*: desire; *rajasi*: in the mode of passion; *etāni*: all this; *jāyante*: develop; *vivṛddhe*: when there is excess; *bharataṛṣabha*: O chief of the descendants of Bharata

14.12 *O chief of the Bharata, when there is an increase in the mode of passion, the symptoms of great attachment, uncontrollable desire, hankering, and intense endeavor develop.*

ÀàH\$meàd{fInü à_nXno_nh Ed M&
V_n`WmZ Om ÝVo{ddÖoHëZÝXZ&& 13

aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca pramādo moha eva ca |
tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe kurunandana || 14.13

aprakāśaḥ: darkness; *apravṛttiḥ*: inactivity; *ca*: and; *pramādaḥ*: madness; *mohaḥ*: illusion; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: and; *tamasi*: of the mode of ignorance; *etāni*: these; *jāyante*: are manifested; *vivṛddhe*: is developed; *kurunandana*: O son of Kuru

14.13 *O son of Kuru, when there is an increase in the mode of ignorance, madness, illusion, inertia and darkness are manifested.*

`XmgÎdoàdÖoVwàb`\$`mV Xb^V&
VXnm_{dXn\$bnb\$nz_bnŸa{VnÚV&& 14

yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu pralayaṁ yāti dehabhṛt |
tado 'ttamavidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate || 14.14

yadā: when; *sattve*: mode of goodness; *pravṛddhe*: in development; *tu*: but; *pralayaṁ*: dissolution; *yāti*: goes; *dehabhṛt*: embodied; *tadā*: at that time; *uttamavidāṁ*: of the great sages; *lokān*: the planets; *amalān*: pure; *pratipadyate*: attains.

14.14 *When one dies in the mode of goodness, He goes to the highest of worlds.*

aO{g àb`\$JEdmH\$_g{"fwOm V&
VWm àbrZñV_{g _j>nZfwOm V& 15

*rajasi pralayaṁ gatvā karmasaṅgiṣu jāyate ।
tathā pralīnastamasi mūḍhayoniṣu jāyate ॥ 14.15*

rajasi: in passion; *pralayaṁ*: dissolution; *gatvā*: attaining; *karmasaṅgiṣu*: in the pursuit of activities; *jāyate*: takes birth; *tathā*: thereafter; *pralīnaḥ*: being dissolved; *tamasi*: in ignorance; *mūḍha*: ignorant; *yonīṣu*: species; *jāyate*: take birth

14.15 *When one dies in the mode of passion, he takes birth among those engaged in activities. When he dies in the mode of ignorance, he takes birth in the space of the ignorant.*

H\$_@: gM\$Vñ`nhp gnpIdH\$_{Z_@\$_\$b_&
aOgñVw\\$_\$Xwl_knZ\$_V_g: \\$_\$& 16

*karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyā 'huḥ sāttvikam nirmalam phalam ।
rajasas tu phalam duḥkham ajñānam tamaśaḥ phalam ॥ 14.16*

karmaṇaḥ: of work; *sukṛtasya*: in the mode of goodness; *āhuḥ*: said; *sāttvikam*: mode of goodness; *nirmalam*: purified; *phalam*: result; *rajasas*: of the mode of passion; *tu*: but; *phalam*: result; *duḥkham*: misery; *ajñānam*: nonsense; *tamaśaḥ*: of the mode of ignorance; *phalam*: result

14.16 *By acting in the mode of goodness, one becomes purified. Work done in the mode of passion results in distress, and actions performed in the mode of ignorance result in foolishness.*

gIdnĒgÄOm VoknZ\$aOgnobmo^ Ed M&
à_nX_nhnp_V_gmo^dVn&knZ_d M& 17

*sattvāt samjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva ca ।
pramādamohau tamaso bhavato 'jñānam eva ca ॥ 14.17*

sattvāt: from the mode of goodness; *sañjāyate*: develops; *jñānam*: knowledge; *rajasah*: from the mode of passion; *lobhaḥ*: greed; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also; *pramāda*: madness; *mohau*: illusion; *tamasaḥ*: from the mode of ignorance; *bhavataḥ*: develops; *ajñānam*: ignorance; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also

14.17 *From the mode of goodness, real knowledge develops; from the mode of passion, greed develops; from the mode of ignorance develops foolishness, madness and illusion.*

Urdhvaṁ gacchanti satvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ |
jaghanya guṇa vṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ || 14.18

ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti satvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ |
jaghanya guṇa vṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ || 14.18

ūrdhvaṁ: upwards; *gacchanti*: go; *satvasthāḥ*: one who is situated in the mode of goodness; *madhye*: in the middle; *tiṣṭhanti*: dwell; *rājasāḥ*: those who are situated in the mode of passion; *jaghanya*: abominable; *guṇa*: quality; *vṛttisthāḥ*: occupation; *adhaḥ*: down; *gacchanti*: go; *tāmasāḥ*: people in the mode of ignorance

14.18 *Those situated in the mode of goodness gradually go upward to the higher planets; those in the mode of passion live on the earthly planets; and those in the mode of ignorance go down to the worlds below.*

nā 'nyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṁ yadā draṣṭā 'nupaśyati |
guṇebhyaś ca paraṁ vetti mad bhāvaṁ so 'dhigacchati || 14.19

nā 'nyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṁ yadā draṣṭā 'nupaśyati |
guṇebhyaś ca paraṁ vetti mad bhāvaṁ so 'dhigacchati || 14.19

na: never; *anyaṁ*: other than; *guṇebhyaḥ*: from the qualities; *kartāraṁ*: the performer; *yadā*: when; *draṣṭā 'nupaśyati*: he who sees properly; *guṇebhyaś ca*: from the modes of nature; *paraṁ*: transcendental; *vetti*: know; *mad bhāvaṁ*: My spiritual nature; *so*: he; *adhigacchati*: is promoted

14.19 When we see that there is nothing beyond these modes of nature in all activities and that the supreme Lord is transcendental to all these modes, the seeker can know My spiritual nature.

gūṇān etān atītya trīn dehī dehasamudbhavān |
janma mṛtyu jarā duḥkhair vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute || 14.20

guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī dehasamudbhavān |
janma mṛtyu jarā duḥkhair vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute || 14.20

guṇān: qualities; etān: all these; atītya: transcending; trīn: three; dehī: embodied; deha: body; samudbhavān: produced of; janma: birth; mṛtyu: death; jarā: old age; duḥkhaiḥ: distresses; vimuktaḥ: being freed from; amṛtam: nectar; aśnute: enjoys

14.20 When the embodied being is able to transcend these three modes, he can become free from birth, death, old age and their distresses and can enjoy nectar even in this life.

arjuna uvāca
kaiḥ liṅgaiḥ trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho |
kim ācāraḥ katham ca 'tān trīn guṇān ativartate || 14.21

arjuna uvāca
kaiḥ liṅgaiḥ trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho |
kim ācāraḥ katham ca 'tān trīn guṇān ativartate || 14.21

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; kaiḥ: by which; liṅgaiḥ: symptoms; trīn: three; guṇān: qualities; etān: all this; atītaḥ: having transcended; bhavati: become; prabho: my Lord; kim: what; ācāraḥ: behavior; katham: what; ca: also; etān: these; trīn: three; guṇān: qualities; ativartate: transcend

14.21 Arjuna inquired: O my Lord, by what symptoms is one known who is transcendental to those modes? What is his behavior? And how does he transcend the modes of nature?

ī r ^ J d m Z d n M
 à H \$ m e \$ M à d q i m M _ n h _ d M n n e S e l l e
 Z Ū ū i > g ā ā d f m m Z Z { Z d f m m Z H \$ m - { V l l e 22

śrī bhagavān uvāca
prakāśaṁ ca pravṛttiṁ ca moham eva ca pāṇḍava ।
na dveṣṭi saṁpravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati ॥ 14.22

śrī bhagavān uvāca: the supreme personality of godhead said; *prakāśaṁ ca*: and illumination; *pravṛttiṁ ca*: and attachment; *moham*: illusion; *eva ca*: also; *pāṇḍava*: O son of Pandu; *na dveṣṭi*: does not hate; *saṁpravṛttāni*: although developed; *na nivṛttāni*: nor stop development; *kāṅkṣati*: desires

C X n g r Z d X n g r Z n o J u l j i n Z { d M n e ` V l l e
 J u m d V l V B E ` d ` n e d { V o s V Z o V l l e 23

udāsīnavad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate ।
guṇā vartanta ity eva yo 'vatiṣṭhati ne 'ngate ॥ 14.23

udāsīnavat: as if neutral; *āsīnaḥ*: situated; *guṇaiḥ*: by the qualities; *yah*: one who; *na*: never; *vicālyate*: is agitated; *guṇāḥ*: the qualities; *vartante*: is situated; *ity eva*: knowing thus; *yah*: one who; *avatiṣṭhati*: remains; *na*: never; *eṅgati*: flickering

g _ X u l g i l : n d i W : g _ b n i o n f _ H \$ m m Z : l l e
 V i e ` { a ` n a ` n o Y r a n V i e ` { Z Y X n e _ g o V l V : l l e 24

sama duḥkha sukhaḥ svasthaḥ sama loṣṭāśma kāñcanaḥ ।
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīras tulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ ॥ 14.24

sama: equal; *duḥkha*: in distress; *sukhaḥ*: in happiness; *svasthaḥ*: being situated himself; *sama*: equally; *loṣṭa*: a lump of earth; *āśma*: stone; *kāñcanaḥ*: gold; *tulya*: equally disposed; *priya*: dear; *apriyo*: undesirable; *dhīraḥ*: steady; *tulya*: equally; *nindā*: in defamation; *ātmasaṁstutiḥ*: in praise of himself

~nZmn~nZ`nñVie`ñVie`m{`İnfanj`nñk
gdnñ^ñ[ñE`mJr JñmVrV: g CÀ`Vñk 25İ

*mānāpamānyos tulyas tulyo mitrāripakṣayoḥ ।
sarvārambhaparityāgī guṇātitaḥ sa ucyate ॥ 14.25*

māna: in honor; *apamānyoḥ*: dishonor; *tulyaḥ*: equally; *tulyaḥ*: equally; *mitra*: friend; *ari*: enemy; *pakṣayoḥ*: in parties; *sarva*: all; *ārambha*: endeavor; *parityāgī*: renouncer; *guṇātitaḥ*: transcendental to the material modes of nature; *saḥ*: he; *ucyate*: is said to be

14.22,23,24,25 The Blessed Lord said: He who does not hate illumination, attachment and delusion when they are present, nor longs for them when they disappear; who is seated like one unconcerned, being situated beyond these material reactions of the modes of nature, who remains firm, knowing that the modes alone are active; He who regards alike pleasure and pain, and looks on a lump of earth, a stone and a piece of gold with an equal eye; who is wise and holds praise and blame to be the same; who is unchanged in honor and dishonor, who treats friend and foe alike, who has abandoned all result based undertakings—such a man is said to have transcended the modes of nature.

~ñM`ñi`{^Mmñ ^{°\$ññZ gñVñk
g Jñmñg_VrE`ññ~ñ^ñ m HññVñk 26

*maṁ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate ।
sa guṇān samatītyai 'tān brahmabhūyāya kalpate ॥ 14.26*

maṁ: unto Me; *ca*: also; *yaḥ*: person; *avyabhicāreṇa*: without fail; *bhaktiyogena*: by devotional service; *sevate*: renders service; *saḥ*: he; *guṇān*: all the modes of material nature; *samatītya*: transcending; *etān*: all this; *brahmabhūyāya*: to be elevated to the Brahman platform; *kalpate*: is considered.

14.26 One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.

~{Umo{h à{Võsh__Yñ`m`n` M&
emeVñ` M Y_® guññ`H\$ñ/VH\$ñ` M&& 27

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham amṛtasyā 'vyayasya ca |
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyai 'kāntikasya ca || 14.27*

brahmaṇaḥ: of the impersonal brahmajyoti; *hi*: certainly; *pratiṣṭhā*: the rest; *aham*: I am; *amṛtasya*: of the immortal; *avyayasya*: of the imperishable; *ca*: also; *śāśvatasya*: of the eternal; *ca*: and; *dharmasya*: of the rightful state; *sukhasya*: happiness; *aikāntikasya*: ultimate; *ca*: also.

14.27 And I am the basis of impersonal Brahman, which is the rightful state of ultimate happiness, and which is immortal, imperishable and eternal.

B{V I r_ØJdØrVngn{ZfEgw~{dUm`n\$`nolemóo
I rH\$UnOg\$ñkoJñl`{d^m`nolnoZm_ MVK@ñm`m`... V&&

*iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde GuṇatrayaVibhāga yogo nāma caturdaśo 'dhyāyaḥ ||*

In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the fourteenth discourse designated:

Guṇatraya Vibhāga Yogaḥ

Verses Of Gita Chapter 15

AWn#mXemÜ`m`...

néfñm_`m|:

Puruṣottama Yogaḥ

I r ^JdmZmNm

D\$ü@_b_Y:eml \$AœEW\$ānhpì``_&

N\$Xm\$g`ñ`nUmZ`ñV\$dk g dK(dV& 1

śrī bhagavan uvāca

*ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥśākham aśvatthaṁ prāhur avyayam |
chandāmsi yasya parṇāni yas taṁ veda sa vedavit || 15.1*

śrī bhagavan uvāca: the Lord said; *ūrdhvamūlam:* with roots above; *adhaḥ:* downwards; *śākham:* branches; *aśvatthaṁ:* banyan tree; *prāhuḥ:* is said; *avyayam:* eternal; *chandāmsi:* the vedic hymns; *yasya:* of which; *parṇāni:* leaves; *yaḥ:* anyone who; *taṁ:* that; *veda:* knows; *saḥ:* he; *vedavit:* knower of the Vedas

15.1 Bhagavān says, 'The imperishable tree of life symbolized by the Asvatta has its root above with the branches spreading below. It has the leaves in the form of the Vedic chants. The one who knows this eternal tree becomes the knower of Veda.'

AYüüü\$ägVññVñ` eml mJüädÖm{df`ädñbm&
AYü _bmí`Zü\$Vñ(Z H\$ _ñZ-ÝYr{Z _Zñ`bmñ&& 2

*adhaś co 'rdhvaṁ prasṛtās tasya śākhā guṇapraṇṛddhā viśayapraṇālāḥ |
adhaś ca mūlānyanusāntatāni karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke || 15.2*

adhaḥ: below; *ca:* and; *urdhvaṁ:* above; *prasṛtāḥ:* extended; *tasya:* its; *śākhāḥ:* branches; *guṇa:* by the human attributes; *praṇṛddhāḥ:* nourished; *viśaya:* sense objects; *praṇālāḥ:* buds; *adhaḥ:* downward; *ca:* and; *mūlāni:* roots; *anusāntatāni:* extended; *karma:* action; *anubandhīni:* bound; *manuṣyaloke:* in the world of men

*15.2 The branches of this tree extend below and above the earth, nourished by the three human attributes, **guṇa**. Its buds are the sense objects. This tree also has roots going down and these are bound to the resultant actions of humans.*

Z eñ`ñ`b VWmbä`VoZñVmoZ MmXZ`M gñ{Vöññ
AeEW_z\$gñde\$T>_p_g"eóU ÑTz {Nñdmñ 3

na rūpam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate nā 'nto na cā 'dir na ca saṃpratiṣṭhā |
aśvattham enaṃ suvirūḍhamūlam asaṅgaśastrena dṛḍhena chittvā || 15.3

na: not; *rūpam*: form; *asya*: its; *iha*: here; *tathā*: as such; *upalabhyate*: can be perceived; *na*: not; *antaḥ*: end; *na*: not; *ca*: and; *ādiḥ*: beginning; *na*: not; *ca*: and; *sampratiṣṭhā*: foundation; *aśvattham*: banyan tree; *enam*: this; *suvirūḍha*: strongly; *mūlam*: rooted; *asaṅgaśastrena*: by the weapon of detachment; *drdha*: strong; *chittvā*: cut down

15.3 The real form of this tree cannot be perceived. No one can understand where it ends, where it begins, or where its foundation is. But with determination one must cut down this strongly rooted tree with the weapon of detachment.

Vv: nX\$VEn[a_m(JV9i` \$ ` pñ_ÝJVmZ {ZdVpV ^ÿ :&
V_d MmÚ\$néf\$ànÚo` V: àdÿIm àgVmnnmUnk& 4

tataḥ padaṁ tat parimārgitavyaṁ yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ ।
tam eva cā 'dyaṁ purusaṁ prapadye yataḥ pravrittih prasrtā purāṇī ॥ 15.4

tataḥ: thereafter; *padāṃ*: goal; *tat*: that; *parimārgitavyaṃ*: has to be searched out; *yasmin*: where; *gatāḥ*: going; *na*: not; *nivartanti*: return; *bhūyaḥ*: again; *tam*: in that; *eva*: even; *ca*: and; *ādyāṃ*: original; *puruṣaṃ*: supreme; *prapadye*: surrender; *yataḥ*: from whom; *pravrittih*: activity; *prasṛtā*: began; *purāṇī*: ancient

15.4 One must then seek that place from which having gone, one never returns and surrender to the supreme Being from whom all activities started from ancient times.

{Z_n2_nhm{OVg"Xnfm AU`nē_{ZÈ`m{d{ZdñH\$m_m`
 ÜÜfd©P\$m gñ Xwl gk;JANÈ`_Tm nX_ì``\$VV& 5

*nirmānamohā jitasangadoṣā adhyātmanityā vinivṛittakāmāḥ ।
 dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukhaduḥkhsamjñair gacchanty
 amūḍhāḥ padam avyayaṁ tat ॥ 15.5*

nirmāna: without pride; *mohāḥ*: delusion; *jita*: having conquered; *saṅga*: attachment; *doṣāḥ*: defects; *adhyātma*: in the Self; *nityāḥ*: eternally; *vinivṛitta*: detached; *kāmāḥ*: from desires; *dvandvair*: from the dualities; *vimuktāḥ*: liberated; *sukha*: happiness; *duḥkha*: sorrow; *saṁjñaiḥ*: known; *gacchanti*: reach; *amūḍhāḥ*: not confused; *padam*: goal; *avyayaṁ*: eternal; *tat*: that

15.5 Those who are free from pride, delusion, and attachment, those who dwell in the Self, who are done with lust, who are free from dualities of joy and sorrow, not confused and those who know how to surrender to the supreme person, attain the eternal consciousness.

Z VØmg`Vogÿ m)Z eemf #Z nmdH\$:&
 `ØEdmZ {ZdVØVoVÖm_na_\$__& 6

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śasāṅko na pāvakaḥ ।
 yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramaṁ mama ॥ 15.6*

na: not; *tat*: that; *bhāsayate*: illuminates; *sūryaḥ*: the sun; *na*: not; *śasāṅkaḥ*: the moon; *na*: not; *pāvakaḥ*: fire; *yad*: where; *gatvā*: going; *na*: not; *nivartante*: return; *tad dhāma*: that abode; *paramaṁ*: supreme; *mama*: My

15.6 That supreme space of eternal consciousness, My consciousness, is not illumined by the Sun or the Moon, or by fire. Those who enter that space never return to this material world.

_dnfmoOrdbnH\$Ord^y/: gZnVZ:&
 _Z:föazpñD`m(U àH\$VñWm(Z HsfV& 7

mamai 'vā 'mśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ ।
manaḥ ṣaṣṭhānī 'ndriyāṇi prakṛisthāni karṣati ॥ 15.7

mama: My; eva: even; aṁśaḥ: portion; jīvaloke: in the world of life; jīvabhūtaḥ: the living entity; sanātanaḥ: eternal; manaḥ: with the mind; ṣaṣṭhānī: six; indriyāṇi: senses; prakṛiti: active principle; sthāni: staying; karṣati: attract

15.7 The living entities in this conditioned material world are a portion of My eternal Self; in this conditioned material world they are attracted by the six senses, which include the mind, dwelling in prakṛti, the active energy principle.

śarīraṁ yad avāpnoti yac cā 'py utkrāmati 'śvaraḥ ।
gṛihītvaī 'tāni saṁyāti vāyur gandhān ivā 'śayāt ॥ 15.8

śarīraṁ: body; yat: when; avāpnoti: gets; yat: when; cā 'pi: and also; utkrāmati: leaves; īśvaraḥ: the lord of the mind body; gṛihītva: taking; etāni: all these; saṁyāti: goes away; vāyuh: the wind; gandhān: smells; iva: like; āśayāt: from their source

15.8 The spirit in the mind-body living in this material world moves from one body to another carrying these just as air carries aroma.

śrotraṁ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca rasanāṁ ghrāṇaṁ eva ca ।
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cā 'yaṁ viṣayān upasevate ॥ 15.9

śrotraṁ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṁ ca rasanāṁ ghrāṇaṁ eva ca ।
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cā 'yaṁ viṣayān upasevate ॥ 15.9

śrotraṁ: ears; cakṣuḥ: eyes; sparśanaṁ: touch; ca: and; rasanāṁ: tongue; ghrāṇaṁ: smelling power; eva: even; ca: and; adhiṣṭhāya: presiding over; manaḥ: mind; ca: and; ayaṁ: he; viṣayān: sense objects; upasevate: enjoys

15.9 The living entity, the spirit, leaves one body, takes some other body and gets new eyes, ears, nose, tongue and sensing body according to the **samskāras** it had in its causal layer and enjoys the new mental setup.

CEH\$m_YV\$pnVW\$dn(n ^ñOnZ\$dmJhmpYdV_&
{d_YñZñZmî`pV nî`pV knZMj f: & 10

*utkrāmantam̐ sthitam̐ vā 'pi bhuñjānam̐ vā guṇānvitam̐ |
vimūḍhā nā 'nupaśyanti paśyanti jñāna cakṣuṣaḥ || 15.10*

utkrāmantam̐: departing; *sthitam̐*: staying; *vā 'pi*: or also; *bhuñjānam̐*: enjoying; *vā*: or; *guṇānvitam̐*: united with attributes; *vimūḍhā*: foolish persons; *nā*: not; *anupaśyanti*: see; *paśyanti*: see; *jñāna cakṣuṣaḥ*: those who have the eyes of knowledge

15.10 Fools in ignorance do not perceive the spirit being conjunction with the **guṇās** as its enters, enjoys and leaves the body. The one whose inner eye is open clearly for perceives everything.

`VYVno`mJZüZ\$ñî`YĒ`nĒ`Y`dpñVW_&
`VYVno`H\$VnĒ`mZnoZ\$ñî`YĒ`MwG:& 11

*yatanto yoginaś cai 'nam̐ paśyantyātmanyavasthitam̐ |
yatanto 'pyakṛtātmāno nai 'nam̐ paśyantyacetasaḥ || 15.11*

yatantaḥ: trying; *yoginaḥ*: those who practice yoga; *ca*: and; *enam̐*: this; *paśyanti*: can see; *ātmani*: in the self; *avasthitam̐*: situated; *yatantaḥ*: trying; *api*: also; *akṛtātmānaḥ*: without an understanding of the self; *na*: not; *enam̐*: this; *paśyanti*: see; *acetasaḥ*: unintelligent

15.11 The serious practitioner of Yoga, with an understanding of his self, can see all this clearly. But those who do not have an understanding of the self, however much they try, cannot see.

`Xm(XĒ`JV\$VQnoOJØmg`VøI b_&
`fYØ_{g`fñ4mpVñDno[d{Ō`m_H\$_& 12Y

yad ādityagataṁ tejo jagad bhāsayate 'khilam ।
yac candramasi yac cā 'gnau tat tejo viddhi māmakam ॥ 15.12

yat: which; ādityagataṁ: residing in the sun; tejaḥ: light; jagat: world; bhāsayate: lights up; akhilam: completely; yat: which; candramasi: in the moon; yat: which; ca: and; agnau: in the fire; tat: that; tejaḥ: light; viddhi: know; māmakam: from Me

15.12 The light of the sun, the light of the moon and the light of fire, all their radiance is also from Me.

Jm_n(dí` M ^Yn(Z Yna`nā`h_nDgn&
nūUmr_ MnfYr: gdm®gno_no^fdmagnē_H\$: 13

gām āviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmy aham ojasā ।
puṣṇāmi cau 'śadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ ॥ 15.13

gām: the earth; āviśya: entering; ca: and; bhūtāni: living beings; dhārayāmi: sustaining; aham: I; ojasā: by energy; puṣṇāmi: nourishing; ca: and; ośadhīḥ: plant life; sarvāḥ: all; somah: the Moon; bhūtvā: becoming; rasātmakaḥ: watery

15.13 Entering into earth, I support all beings with My energy; becoming the watery moon I nourish all plant life.

Ah\$dpnzano^fdmànUzn\$Xh_nI V: 14
ànUmnZg_m®\$: nMnā`p\$MV(dY_ 14

aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ ।
prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ pacāmy annaṁ caturvidham ॥ 15.14

aham: I; vaiśvānaro: as the digestive fire; bhūtvā: becoming; prāṇinām: of all living beings; deham: body; āśritaḥ: situated; prāṇā: exhaled breath; apāna: inhaled breath; samāyuktaḥ: associated; pacāmi: digest; annaṁ: food; caturvidham: fourfold

15.14 I am the fire of digestion in every living body and I am the breath of life, exhaled and inhaled, with which I digest the four-fold food.

gdṛ Mnhšö{X g{P(d'i'm Îm ñ VknP_nmhZSM&
dXjü gdāh_d dUmdKnVHUX{dXd Mnh_ 15

*sarvasya cā 'ham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṁ ca I
vedaīś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedāntakṛd vedavid eva cā 'ham II 15.15*

sarvasya: of all; ca: and; aham: I; hṛdi: in the heart; sanniviṣṭo: seated; mattaḥ: from Me; smṛtiḥ: memory; jñānam: knowledge; apohanaṁ ca: and loss; vedaīḥ: by the Vedas; ca: also; sarvair: all; aham: I; eva: even; vedyah: to be known; vedāntakṛt: creator of the Vedanta; vedavit: the knower of the Veda; eva: even; ca: and; aham: I

15.15 I am seated in everyone's heart and from Me came memory, knowledge and their loss. I am known by the Vedas; indeed, I am the Creator of Vedānta and I am the knower of the Vedas.

Üñ(d_nñfñbnñj aÜñj a Ed M&
j a: gdñU ^ññZ HññWñj a CÄ`Vñ 16

*dvāvimau puruṣau loke kṣaraś cā 'kṣara eva ca I
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate II 15.16*

dvāu: two; imau: these; puruṣau: puruṣa; loke: in the world; kṣaraḥ: perishable; ca: and; akṣara: imperishable; eva: even; ca: and; kṣaraḥ: the perishable; sarvāṇi: all; bhūtāni: living being; kūṭasthaḥ: unchangeable; akṣara: imperishable; ucyate: is said

15.16 There are two things, the perishable and the imperishable, in this world. There are the living beings who are perishable while there is the unchangeable, the imperishable.

CÎm_: nñfñEdY`: na_nĒ_ñ`KnöV: &
`nbnññI`_ñ(dî {~^Ē`P` Bññ: 17

*uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyāḥ paramātme 'ty udāhṛtaḥ I
yo lokatrayam āviśya bibharti avyaya īśvaraḥ II 15.17*

15.17 Besides these two, there is the supreme **Puruṣa** the Lord Himself, who pervades and sustains these three worlds.

15.19 *Whoever knows Me as the supreme without a doubt, is to be understood as the knower of everything and he worships Me with all his being, O son of Bharata.*

Verses Of Gita Chapter 16

AW fñ6enēJ` m` ...

Xpdmgnān{0^mJ` mJ:

Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāga Yogah

I r ^JdmZmM

A^` \$gIdge{Ökn2` mJ` dñW{V: &

XmZ\$X_ü` `kü ñdmJ` m` ñVn AnO@_ & 1

śrī bhagavan uvāca

abhayaṁ sattvasaṁsuddhir jñānayoga vyavasthitiḥ ।

dānaṁ damaś ca yajñāś ca svādhyāyas tapa ājavam ॥ 16.1

A{hgm gE`_HñVñE` mJ: enpVaneZ_ &

X` m ^VidbmñEđ\$_mX\$hrāMmb_ & 2Y

ahiṁsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam ।

dayā bhūteṣvaloluptvaṁ mārdayaṁ hrīracāpalam ॥ 16.2

V@: j _m Y{V: enpM_ĐñbmZñ{V_ñ{ZVñ &

^dpV gñX\$Xpñ_{^OmVñ` ^mV & 3Y

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nā ’timānitā ।

bhavanti sampadam daivīm abhijātasya bhārata ॥ 16.3

śrī bhagavan uvāca: Lord Krishna said; *abhayaṁ*: fearlessness; *sattvasaṁsuddhiḥ*: purification of one’s existence; *jñāna*: knowledge; *yoga*: of linking up; *vyavasthitiḥ*: the situation; *dānaṁ*: charity; *damaś ca*: and controlling the mind; *yajñāś ca*: and performance of sacrifice; *svādhyāyaḥ*: study of vedic literature; *tapaḥ*: austerity; *ājavam*: simplicity; *ahiṁsā*: nonviolence; *satyam*: truthfulness; *akrodhaḥ*: freedom from anger; *tyāgaḥ*: renunciation; *śāntiḥ*: tranquillity; *apaiśunam*: aversion to fault-finding; *dayā*:

mercy; *bhūteṣu*: towards all living entities; *aloluptvaṁ*: freedom from greed; *mārdavaṁ*: gentleness; *hrīḥ*: modesty; *acāpalam*: determination; *tejaḥ*: vigor; *kṣamā*: forgiveness; *dhṛtiḥ*: fortitude; *śaucam*: cleanliness; *adrohaḥ*: freedom from envy; *na*: not; *atimānitā*: expectation of honor; *bhavanti*: become; *saṁpadāṁ*: qualities; *daivīm*: transcendental; *abhijātasya*: of one who is born of; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata (Arjuna).

16.1,2,3 Bhagavān Krishna says, 'Fearlessness, purification of the being, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity and being centered on the being, performance of sacrifices, and accumulation of knowledge, austerity, simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquility, aversion to fault finding, compassion for all living entities, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty, studied determination, vigor, more forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, freedom from envy, and from the passion of honor, these transcendental qualities, O Son of Bharata (Arjuna), belong to divine men, endowed with divine nature.'

Xâ^noXnne(^_mZü H\$M: nmēî`_d M&
AknZ\$Mm(^OmVñ` nmW©gânX_mgar_&& 4

dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca |
ajñānaṁ cā 'bhijātasya pārtha saṁpadam āsurīm || 16.4

dambhaḥ: pride; *darpaḥ*: arrogance; *abhimānaḥ*: conceit; *ca*: and; *krodhaḥ*: anger; *pārūṣyam*: harshness; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: and; *ajñānaṁ*: ignorance; *ca*: and; *abhijātasya*: one who is born of; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *saṁpadam*: nature; *āsurīm*: demonic.

16.4 Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness or cruelty, and ignorance - these qualities belong to those born with demonic nature, O son of Pritha (Arjuna).

Xpdr gân{Ü_nj m {Z~ŸYm ngar_Vn&
meM: gânX\$Xpdr{^OmVn(g nmēSdV&& 5

daivī saṁpad vimokṣāya nibandhayā 'suri matā |
mā śucāḥ saṁpadaṁ daivīm abhijāto 'si pāṇḍava || 16.5

daivī: transcendental, divine; *sāmpat*: nature; *vimokṣāya*: for liberation; *nibandhaya*: for bondage; *asurī*: demonic qualities; *matā*: it is considered; *mā*: do not; *śucāḥ*: worry; *sāmpadaṁ*: nature; *daivīm*: transcendental, divine; *abhijātaḥ*: born; *asi*: you are; *pāṇḍava*: O son of Pandu.

16.5 *The transcendental qualities are conducive to liberation, whereas the demonic qualities make for bondage. Do not worry, Pandava (Arjuna), you are born with divine qualities.*

Ūṇ ^/gJnfbnH@pñ_YXp Anga Ed M&
Xpno{dnVae: àn\$ Anga\$nmW©_oI 6Y

dvau bhūtasargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca I
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta āsuram pārtha me śṛṇu || 16.6

dvau: two; *bhūtasargau*: created living beings; *loke*: in the world; *asmin*: in this; *daiva*: godly; *āsura*: demonic; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: and; *daivaḥ*: divine; *vistaraśaḥ*: in great detail; *prokta*: said; *āsuram*: demonic; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *me*: from Me; *śṛṇu*: hear.

16.6 *Partha (Arjuna), in this world there are two kinds of created beings, one is divine and the other, demonic. I have explained at length to you the divine qualities, now understand the demonic qualities also, so that you will understand and live your life blissfully and happily.*

àdñîmM {ZdñîmM OZmZ {dXamgam &
Z enM\$Zn(n MnMnanaZ gE` \$VfW(dUV& 7Y

pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca janā na vidur āsurāḥ I
na śaucam nā 'pi cā 'cāro na satyam teṣu vidyate || 16.7

pravṛttiṁ: bondages; *ca*: also; *nivṛttiṁ*: liberation; *ca*: and; *janāḥ*: persons; *na*: never; *viduḥ*: know; *āsurāḥ*: demoniac qualities; *na*: never; *śaucam*: cleanliness; *na*: nor; *api*: also; *ca*: and; *ācārah*: behavior; *na*: never; *satyam*: truth; *teṣu*: in them; *vidyate*: there is.

16.7 Persons with demonic nature do not know what is bondage and what is liberation; not what is cleanliness; truthful behavior is not in them.

Agē`_à{Võ\$VoOJXnhpZrcea_&
Anañnag\$`v\$H\$_Y` EH\$m_hVW\$_&& 8

*asatyam apratiṣṭhaṁ te jagad āhur anīśvaram |
aparasparasambhūtaṁ kim anyat kāmahaitukam || 16.8*

asatyam: unreal; *apraṭiṣṭhaṁ*: without foundation; *te*: they; *jagat*: the cosmic manifestation; *āhuḥ*: is said; *anīśvaram*: with no controller; *aparaspara*: by mutual lust; *sambhūtaṁ*: cause; *kim anyat*: there is no other cause; *kāmahaitukam*: it is due to lust only.

16.8 People with such qualities think there is no ultimate energy or intelligence that is running this planet earth, that is running the universe, and that this whole creation is produced out of lust and desire, and is unreal.

EVn\$N{i>diā` Ziāē_mZmēn~ō` :&
à^dYē`uH\$_nē: j`m` OJVnē(hVm&& 9

*etām dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya naṣṭātmāno 'lpabuddhayaḥ |
prabhavantyugrakarmāṇaḥ kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ || 16.9*

etām: thus; *dṛṣṭim*: vision; *avaṣṭabhya*: accepting; *naṣṭa*: lost; *ātmānaḥ*: self; *alpabuddhayaḥ*: less intelligent; *prabhavanti*: come forth; *ugrakarmāṇaḥ*: in painful activities; *kṣayāya*: for the destruction; *jagataḥ*: of the world; *ahitāḥ*: unbeneficial.

16.9 Following this material view of creation, these degraded souls with small intellect, lost in themselves and committing cruel deeds are engaged in the destruction of the world.

Ḥśm nḥI Ē` Xūnq\$Xā^ nZ_XnpVdVm&
_nbnK2UhrEdmg0ahhñādvVoeqMdvM&& 10

*kāmam āśritya duṣpūraṁ dambhamānamadānvitāḥ /
mohād gr̥hītvā 'sadgrāhān pravartante 'śucivratāḥ || 16.10*

kāmam: lust; *āśritya*: taking shelter of; *duṣpūraṁ*: insatiable; *dambha*: pride; *māna*: false prestige; *madānvitāḥ*: absorbed in conceit; *mohāt*: by illusion; *gr̥hītvā*: taking; *asat*: nonpermanent; *grāhān*: things; *pravartante*: flourish; *śucī*: unclean; *vratāḥ*: avowed.

16.10 Filled with insatiable desires, hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance; holding wrong views due to delusion, they act with impure motives and for impermanent objectives.

{MŸVm_n[a_ò n\$M āb` nŸVm_mn(I Vm&
Ḥśm_nm^ndna_m EVmd{X{V {Z{üVm&& 11

*cintām aparimeyām ca pralayāntām upāśritāḥ /
kāmapabhogaparamā etāvad iti niścītāḥ || 16.11*

AmemmeeV_Ōm Ḥśm_Ḥśm/nam`Um&
BŸŸVoḤśm_^ndnV_Ÿ`m`zNwGĀM`nZ&& 12

*āśāpāśasatair baddhāḥ kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ /
īhante kāmabhogārtham anyāyenā 'rthasañcayān || 16.12*

cintām: fears and anxieties; *aparimeyām*: unmeasurable; *ca*: and; *pralayāntām*: unto the point of death; *upāśritāḥ*: having taken shelter of them; *kāmapabhoga*: sense gratification; *paramāḥ*: the highest goal of life; *etavad*: thus; *iti*: in this way; *niścītāḥ*: ascertained; *āśāpāśa*: entanglements in the network of hope; *śataiḥ*: by hundreds; *baddhāḥ*: being bound; *kāma*: lust; *krodha*: anger; *parāyaṇāḥ*: always situated in that mentality; *īhante*: desire; *kāma*: lust; *bhogā*: sense enjoyment; *artham*: for that purpose; *anyāyenā*: illegally; *artha*: wealth; *sañcayān*: accumulate.

16.11,12 Obsessed with endless anxiety lasting until death, considering sense gratification their highest aim, and convinced that sense pleasure is everything; bound by hundreds of ties of desire and enslaved and filled with anger, they strive to obtain wealth by unlawful means to fulfill sensual pleasures.

BX_Ū _`mbāY{__šānBñ`o_ZnaW_&
BX_ñVrX_{n_o^{dī`{V nāZY2_&& 13Y

idam adya mayā labdham imaṁ prāpsyē manoratham ।
idam astī 'dam api me bhaviṣyati punar dhanam ॥ 16.13

idam: this; adya: today, now; mayā: by me; labdham: attained; imaṁ: this; prāpsyē: I shall gain; manoratham: according to my desires; idam: this; astī: there is; idam: this; api: also; me: mine; bhaviṣyati: will increase in the future; punaḥ: again; dhanam: wealth.

16.13 They think: This has been gained by me today; I shall fulfill this desire; I have this much wealth and will have more wealth in the future;

Agm_`mhV: eĪmZi`oMnnanZ{n&
B@amh_hſ^mſr {gŌmehſ~bdnſgſ rſ& 14

asau mayā hataḥ śatrur haniṣye cā 'parān api ।
īśvaro 'ham ahaṁ bhogī siddho 'haṁ balavān sukhī ॥ 16.14

AmT&ne{^OZdmZpñ_ Hſneſ`nepñV gñNemo_`n&
`ú`oXmñ`m_`mXî` BĒ`knZ{d_mhVm&& 15

ādhyo 'bhijanavān asmi ko 'nyo 'sti sadṛśo mayā ।
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya ity ajñānavimohitāḥ ॥ 16.15

asau: that; mayā: by me; hataḥ: has been killed; śatruḥ: enemy; haniṣye: I shall kill; ca: also; aparān: others; api: certainly; īśvaro: the lord; aham: I am; ahaṁ: I am; bhogī: the enjoyer; siddhaḥ: complete, perfect; ahaṁ: I am; balavān: powerful; sukhī: happy; ādhyāḥ: wealthy; abhijanavān: surrounded by aristocratic relatives; asmī: I am; kaḥ: who else; anyāḥ: other; asti: there is; sadṛśo: like; mayā: me; yakṣye: I shall sacrifice; dāsyāmi: I shall give charity; modiṣya: I shall rejoice; iti: thus; ajñāna: by ignorance; vimohitāḥ: misled, deluded by.

16.14, 15 *That enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others also. I am the Lord. I am the enjoyer. I am successful, powerful, and happy; I am rich and born in a noble family. Who is equal to me? I shall perform sacrifice, I shall give charity, and I shall rejoice. Thus deluded by ignorance.*

AZb\$Mīnd^mVm_nhOntg_mclVm&
àg°\$m H\$m_ ^mofwnVpV ZaH@eMm&& 16

*aneka citta vibhrāntā moha jāla samāvṛtāḥ |
prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu patanti narake 'śucau || 16. 16*

aneka: many; citta vibhrāntāḥ: perplexed by anxieties; moha jāla: by a net of illusions; samāvṛtāḥ: surrounded; prasaktāḥ: attached; kāma: lust; bhogeṣu: sense gratification; patanti: slides down; narake: into hell; śucau: unclean.

16.16 *Thus confused by various anxieties and caught in a net of illusions, one becomes too deeply attached to sensory pleasures and falls into hell.*

AnĒ_gâ^ndVm_nVāYm_YZ_nZ_XmPdVm&
`OYVoZm_`kṇVoXâ^Znd{YndP\$& 17

*ātmasambhāvitāḥ stabdhā dhanamānamadānvitāḥ |
yajante nāmayajñais te dambhenā 'vidhipūrvakam || 16.17*

ātmasambhāvītāḥ: self-complacent; *stabdhāḥ*: conceited; *dhanamāna*: wealth and false pride; *madānvitāḥ*: absorbed in pride; *yajante*: perform sacrifices; *nāma*: in name only; *yajñaiḥ*: with such a sacrifice; *te*: they; *dambhena*: out of pride; *avidhipūrvakam*: without following regulations.

16.17 Self-complacent and always conceited, deluded by wealth and false pride, they perform superficial sacrifices in name only, without following the vedic rules or regulations.

Ahṁkāraḥ~balaṁ darpaṁ kāmāṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ |
mām ātmaparadeheṣu pradviṣanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ || 18

ahamkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmāṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ |
mām ātmaparadeheṣu pradviṣanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ || 16.18

ahamkāraṁ: false ego; *balaṁ*: power, strength; *darpaṁ*: arrogance, pride; *kāmāṁ*: lust; *krodhaṁ*: anger; *ca*: also; *saṁśritāḥ*: having taken shelter; *mām*: of Me; *ātma*: one's own; *paradeheṣu*: in other bodies; *pradviṣantaḥ*: blasphemers; *abhyasūyakāḥ*: envious.

16.18 The demonic person, consumed by ego, power, pride, lust and anger, becomes envious of the supreme personality of godhead, who is situated in his own body and in the bodies of others, and blasphemes against Him.

tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu narādhamān |
kṣipāmyajasram aśubhān āsurīṣu eva yoniṣu || 19

tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān saṁsāreṣu narādhamān |
kṣipāmyajasram aśubhān āsurīṣu eva yoniṣu || 16.19

tān: those; *ahaṁ*: I; *dviṣataḥ*: envious; *krūrān*: cruel, wicked; *saṁsāreṣu*: into the ocean of material existence; *narādhamān*: the lowest of mankind; *kṣipāmi*: put; *ajasram*: innumerable; *aśubhān*: inauspicious; *āsurīṣu*: demonic; *eva*: certainly; *yonīṣu*: in the wombs.

16.19 *Those who are envious (of Him) and cruel, who are the lowest among men, I repeatedly cast into the ocean of material existence, into various lowly, demonic forms of life.*

Angat`nqZ_mPm_TmOY_ZOY_ZV&
_m_ànb`p H\$Vô VVmo`nE`Y_n\$J{V_&& 20

*āsurīm yonim apannā mūḍhā janmani janmani |
mām aprāpyai 'va kaunteya tato yānti adhamām gatim || 16.20*

āsurīm: demonic; *yonim*: species; *apannā*: gaining; *mūḍhā*: the foolish; *janmani janmani*: in birth after birth; *mām*: unto Me; *aprāpya*: without achieving; *eva*: certainly; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *tataḥ*: thereafter; *yānti*: goes; *adhamām*: condemned; *gatim*: destination.

16.20 *These foolish beings attain repeated birth amongst the species of demoniac life. Without ever achieving Me, O Son of Kunti, they sink into the most abominable existence.*

{I{dY\$ZaH\$`&\$Uma\$ZmeZ_nE_Z:V&
H\$m_: H\$m/nVWm bmo`nVn_nKVEI`\$E`OwV&& 21

*trividhaṁ narakasye 'daṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ |
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet || 16.21*

trividhaṁ: three kinds of; *narakasya*: hellish; *idaṁ*: this; *dvāraṁ*: gate; *nāśanam*: ruin, destruction; *ātmanaḥ*: of the self; *kāmaḥ*: lust; *krodhaḥ*: anger; *tathā*: as well as; *lobhaḥ*: greed; *tasmāt*: therefore; *etat*: these; *trayam*: three; *tyajet*: give up.

16.21 *There are three gates leading to this hell: lust, anger and greed. As they lead to the degradation of the soul, these three are to be abandoned.*

EV{d`P\$: H\$Vô V_nbmaj{O{^Z&V&
AnMaE`nE_Z: I o`nVWmo`nV nan\$J{V_&& 22

*etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya tamodvāraiḥ tribhir naraḥ |
ācaraty ātmanaḥ śreyas tato yāti parām gatim || 16.22*

etaiḥ: by these; *vimuktaḥ*: escaped; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *tamodvāraiḥ*: the gates of darkness; *tribhiḥ*: three kinds of; *naraḥ*: a person; *ācarati*: acts, behaves; *ātmanaḥ*: self; *śreyasḥ*: benediction; *tataḥ*: thereafter; *yāti*: goes; *parām*: supreme; *gatim*: destination

16.22 *Those who have escaped these three gates of hell, O son of Kunti, behave in a manner beneficial to the (evolution of the) soul, and thus (gradually) attain the supreme destination.*

ṁ: emó{d{Y_ñgĀ` dV@oH\$m_H\$naV:ñ
Z g {g{Ö_dññZñV Z gñ \$Z nan\$J{V_ññ 23

*yaḥ śāstravidhim utsrjya vartate kāmākārataḥ |
na sa siddhim avāpnoti na sukhaṁ na parām gatim || 16.23*

yaḥ: anyone; *śāstravidhim*: the injunctions of the scriptures; *utsrjya*: giving up; *vartate*: remains; *kāmākārataḥ*: acting whimsically in lust; *na*: never; *saḥ*: he; *siddhim*: perfection; *avāpnoti*: achieves; *na*: never; *sukhaṁ*: happiness; *na*: never; *parām*: the supreme; *gatim*: destination.

16.23 *But he who discards scriptural injunctions and acts according to his base impulses attains neither perfection, nor happiness, nor the supreme destination.*

Vñ_mĀNñóšà_mU\$VoH\$m_nPññ P dññVñññ
knñdm emó{dYññZññ\$H\$_H\$Vññ_hññññ 24

*tasmāc chāstraṁ pramāṇaṁ te kāryākāryavyavasthitau |
jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṁ karma kartum ihā 'rhasi || 16.24*

tasmāt: therefore; *śāstraṁ*: scriptures; *pramāṇaṁ*: evidence; *te*: your; *kārya*: duty; *akārya*: forbidden activities; *vyavasthitau*: in determining; *jñātvā*: knowing; *śāstra*: of scripture; *vidhāna*: regulations; *uktaṁ*: as declared; *karma*: work; *kartum*: to do; *ihā 'rhasi*: you should do it

16.24 By the regulations of the scriptures, one should understand what is duty and what is not duty. After being versed in scriptural injunctions, one should act accordingly.

B{V I r_ØJdØrVngn{ZfEgw~«{dÚm`nſ`nlemóo
I rH\$UnOſgſnKoXpndngân{Ú^nl`nlnZm_ fnsenÚ`m`... V&&

*iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde daivāsurasaṁpad Vibhāga yogo nāma ṣoḍaśo 'dhyāyaḥ ||*

*In the **Upaniṣad** of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of **Brahman**, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the sixteenth discourse designated:*

Daivāsura Saṁpad vibhāga Yogaḥ

Verses Of Gita Chapter 17

AW gßVXeñÜ` m` ...

I Ōmĭ`{d^mĭ`mĭ:

Śraddhatraya Vibhāga Yogaḥ

AOŲ CdnM

`oemó{d{Y_ŋgĀ` `OYVoI Ō`mĭdVmĭ&
Vfñ\$ZŌmVwH\$mH\$U gĭd_nhmaOñV_&& 1

arjuna uvāca

*ye śāstravidhim utsṛjya yajante śraddhayā 'nvitāḥ |
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ || 17.1*

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; *ye:* those; *śāstravidhim:* the regulations of scripture; *utsṛjya:* giving up; *yajante:* worship; *śraddhayā:* sincerity; *anvitāḥ:* possessed of; *teṣāṁ:* of them; *niṣṭhā:* faith; *tu:* but; *kā:* what is that; *Kṛṣṇa:* O Krishna; *sattvam:* in goodness; *āho:* said; *rajas:* in aggression; *tamaḥ:* in ignorance.

17.1 Arjuna said: What is the mode of devotion of those who perform spiritual practices with sincerity, but without following the scriptural injunctions, O Krishna? Is it in the mode of goodness, aggression or ignorance?

I r ^JdnZdnMĭ&

[ĭ{dYm^d{V I ŌmXŋhZñ\$gmñd^ndOnĭ&
gmĭdH\$ anOgr Mpd Vm_gr MŲV Vñ\$ I ŲŲ&& 2

śrī bhagavān uvāca

*trividhā bhavati śraddhā dehinām sā svabhāvajā |
sāttvikī rājasī cai 'va tāmasī ce 'ti tām śṛṇu || 17.2*

śrī bhagavan uvāca: Krishna said; *trividhā:* three kinds; *bhavati:* become; *śraddhā:* sincerity; *dehinām:* of the body; *sā:* that; *svabhāvajā:* according to his nature; *sāttvikī:*

nature of goodness; *rājasī*: nature of aggression; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *tāmasī*: nature of ignorance; *ca*: and; *iti*: thus; *tām*: that; *śṛṇu*: hear from Me.

17.2 The Supreme Lord said: The natural faith of embodied beings is of three kinds: goodness, aggression, and ignorance. Now hear about these from Me.

gīdnZē\$mgdñ I Ōm^d(V ^naVñ
I Ōm_`mē`\$nēfno`no`ANŌ: g Ed g:ñ 3

sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata |
śraddhāmāyo 'yam puruṣo yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ || 17.3

satvānurūpā: according to the existence; *sarvasya*: of everyone; *śraddhā*: sincerity; *bhavati*: becomes; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata; *śraddhā*: sincerity; *mayah*: full; *ayam*: this; *puruṣaḥ*: living entity; *yaḥ*: anyone; *yat*: that; *śraddhaḥ*: sincerity; *saḥ*: that; *eva*: certainly; *saḥ*: he.

17.3 O Arjuna, the sincerity of each is in accordance with one's own natural disposition. One is known by one's sincerity. One can become whatever one wants to be.

`OYVogmīdH\$mXdmñ` j aj n\$g anOgmñ
àVnñ^yJUñññ`o`OYVoVm_gmOZmñ 4

yajante sātṭvikā devān yakṣaraksāmsi rājasāḥ |
pretān bhūtagaṇāṁś cā 'nye yajante tāmasā janāḥ || 17.4

yajante: worship; *sātṭvikāḥ*: those who are in the mode of goodness; *devān*: deities; *yakṣaraksāmsi rājasāḥ*: those who are in the mode of aggression worship demons; *pretān*: dead spirits; *bhūtagaṇāṁ*: ghosts; *cā 'nye*: and others; *yajante*: worship; *tāmasāḥ*: in the mode of ignorance; *janāḥ*: people.

17.4 Men in the nature of goodness worship the deities; those in the nature of aggression worship the demons and those in the nature of ignorance worship ghosts and spirits.

Aemó{d{hV\$Kno\$VB`YVo`oVnmOZm&
Xá^nh\$ ag\$ P\$H \$m amJ~bnpYdVm&& 5Y

*aśāstravihitaṁ ghoram tapyante ye tapo janāḥ |
dambhāhaṁkāra samyuktāḥ kāma rāga balānvitāḥ || 17.5*

H\$F©V: earañW\$^VJm_MVg:~
_n\$MpdnV: earañW\$VnpYdÖçmgm{Zü`nZ&& 6Y

*karṣayantaḥ śarīrastham bhūtagrāmam acetasaḥ |
mām cai 'vā 'ntaśśarīrastham tān viddhy āsuraniścayān || 17.6*

aśāstra: not mentioned in the scriptures; *vihitaṁ*: directed; *ghoram*: harmful to others; *tapyante*: undergo penances; *ye*: those; *tapāḥ*: austerities; *janāḥ*: persons; *dambha*: pride; *ahaṁkāra*: egoism; *samyuktāḥ*: engaged; *kāma*: lust; *rāga*: attachment; *bala*: force; *anvitāḥ*: impelled by; *karṣayantaḥ*: tormenting; *śarīrastham*: situated within the body; *bhūtagrāmam*: combination of material elements; *acetasaḥ*: by such a misled mentality; *mām*: to Me; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *antaḥ*: within; *śarīrastham*: situated in the body; *tān*: them; *viddhi*: understand; *āśura*: demons; *niścayān*: certainly.

17.5,6 Ignorant persons of demonic nature are those who practice severe austerities without following the prescription of the scriptures, who are full of hypocrisy and egotism, who are impelled by the force of desire and attachment and who senselessly torture the elements in their body and also Me who dwells within the body.

AnhmanEd{n gdf~ {I{dYm^d{V {a` :~
`knVnnVWmXmZ\$Vfng^~{\$_\$I U&& 7Y

*āhāras tv api sarvasya trividho bhavati priyaḥ |
yajñas tapas tathā dānaṁ teṣāṁ bhedaṁ imaṁ śṛṇu || 17.7*

āhāras: eating; *tu*: certainly; *api*: also; *sarvasya*: of everyone; *trividhaḥ*: three kinds; *bhavati*: there are; *priyaḥ*: dear; *yajñāḥ*: sacrifice; *tapas*: austerity; *tathā*: also; *dānaṁ*: charity; *teṣāṁ*: of them; *bhedam*: differences; *imaṁ*: thus; *śṛṇu*: hear.

17.7 Food that we consume is of three kinds, according to the three types of material nature. So are the sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hear the difference between these three.

Am̐ wgl̐d~bman̐ḥ gīl̐ āṛ{V{ddYḤm̐ḥ
aṇ̐ m̐ {ñZ}Ym̐ pñWam̐ ōŪm̐ Anḥnam̐ gñp̐dHḤā`m̐ḥ 8

āyuh̐ sattva balārogya sukha prīti vivardhanāḥ |
rasyāḥ snigdhāḥ sthirā hr̐dyā āhārāḥ sāt̐tvikapriyāḥ || 17.8

āyuh̐: duration of life; sattva: existence; bala: strength; ārogya: health; sukha: happiness; prīti: satisfaction; vivardhanāḥ: increasing; rasyāḥ: juicy; snigdhāḥ: fatty; sthirāḥ: enduring; hr̐dyāḥ: pleasing to the heart; āhārāḥ: food; sāt̐tvika: goodness; priyāḥ: palatable.

17.8 The foods that promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy are juicy, smooth, substantial, and nutritious. Such foods are liked by persons in the mode of goodness.

HḤḤābbdUn̐ḥ ōUVrūUeḤj {dXm̐{hZ:Ḥ
Anḥnam̐ anOgñ̐`ō`ñ XwI enbHḤm̐`āXm̐ḥ 9Ḥ

kaṭvamla lavaṇātyuṣṇa tīkṣṇa rūkṣa vidāhinaḥ |
āhārā rājasasye 'ṣṭā duḥkha śokāmaya pradāḥ || 17.9

kaṭu: bitter; amla: sour; lavaṇa: salty; atyuṣṇa: very hot; tīkṣṇa: pungent; rūkṣa: dry; vidāhinaḥ: burning; āhārāḥ: food; rājasasya: in the mode of aggression; iṣṭāḥ: palatable; duḥkha: distress; śoka: misery; āmaya pradāḥ: causing disease.

17.9 People in the mode of aggression like foods that are very bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry, and burning, and cause pain, grief, and disease.

yātayāmaṁ gatarasaṁ pūti paryuṣitaṁ ca yat |
ucchistaṁ api cā 'medhyaṁ bhojanaṁ tāmasapriyaṁ || 17.10

17.10 People in the mode of ignorance like foods that are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refuse, and of impure energy.

aphalākāṅkṣibhir yajño vidhidṛṣto ya ijjate ।
yastavyam eve 'ti manah samādhāya sa sāttvikah ॥ 17.11

17.11 Sacrifice without expectation of results, as stipulated in the scriptures, with a firm belief and conviction that it is a duty, is in the mode of goodness.

*abhisamdhāya tu phalaṁ dambhārtham api cai va yat |
ijyate bhārataśreṣṭha taṁ yajñaṁ viddhi rājasam || 17.12*

abhisamdhāya: desiring; *tu*: but; *phalaṁ*: the result; *dambha*: pride; *artham*: for the sake of; *api*: also; *ca*: and; *eva*: certainly; *yat*: that which; *ijyate*: is offered; *bharataśreṣṭha*: O chief of the Bharatas; *taṁ*: that; *yajñam*: sacrifice; *viddhi*: know; *rājas am*: in the mode of aggression

17.12 O Arjuna, that sacrifice that is performed with expectation of result or for show out of pride, is of the nature of aggression.

{d{YhrZ_gYrP\$_Y\hrZ_X{j U_&
I Ōr{da{hV\$`k\$Vm_g\$naMj V&& 13

vidhihīnam asṛṣṭānnam mantrahīnam adakṣiṇam |
śraddhāvirahitaṁ yajñam tāmasaṁ paricakṣate || 17.13

vidhihīnam: without scriptural direction; *asṛṣṭānnam*: without distribution of prasadam; *mantrahīnam*: with no chanting of the vedic hymns; *adakṣiṇam*: with no remunerations to the priests; *śraddhā*: sincerity; *virahitaṁ*: without; *yajñam*: sacrifice; *tāmasaṁ*: in the mode of ignorance; *paricakṣate*: is to be considered

17.13 Sacrifice that is performed without following the scripture, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of mantra, sincerity, and gift, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

Xol{ŪOJēānknpZ\$erM_nO@_&
~€-M`_qhgmm emra\$Vn CÀ`V&& 14

deva dvija guru prājña pūjanaṁ śaucam ārjavam |
brahmacaryam ahimsā ca śārīraṁ tapa ucyate || 17.14

deva: deities; *dvija*: the priest; *guru*: the master; *prājña*: worshipable personalities; *pūjanaṁ*: worship; *śaucam*: cleanliness; *ārjavam*: simplicity; *brahmacaryam*: living in reality; *ahimsā*: nonviolence; *ca*: also; *śārīraṁ*: pertaining to the body; *tapa*: austerity; *ucyate*: is said to be

17.14 *The worship of deities, the priest, the guru, and the wise; purity, honesty, living in reality, and nonviolence are said to be austerity of deed.*

ANUDHAGASDNDŠ`ŠgE`Š{ā`{hV\$M`V
ñdnÜ`m`nä`gZ\$Mpd dnm`ŠVn CÄ`V 15

anudvegakaram vākyaṁ satyaṁ priyahitaṁ ca yat |
svādhyāyābhyasanaṁ cai 'va vāṇmayam tapa ucyate || 17.15

anudvega: not agitating; *karam*: producing; *vākyaṁ*: words; *satyaṁ*: truthful; *priya*: dear; *hitaṁ*: beneficial; *ca*: also; *yat*: which; *svādhyāya*: vedic study; *abhyasanaṁ*: practice; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *vāṇmayam*: of the voice; *tapa*: austerity; *ucyate*: is said to be

17.15 *Speech that is non-offensive, truthful, pleasant, beneficial, and is used for the regular study of scriptures is called austerity of word.*

_Z: āgnK: gnp`Ēd\$ _nZ`nĒ`{d{ZJh:V
^mdg\$Ō[aĒ`VImmo`mZg`Ä`V 16

manahprasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ maunam ātmavinigrahaḥ |
bhāvasaṁsuddhir ity etat tapo mānasam ucyate || 17.16

manahprasādaḥ: fulfillment of the mind; *saumyatvaṁ*: satisfied; *maunam*: gravity; *ātma*: self; *vinigrahaḥ*: control; *bhāva*: nature; *saṁsuddhiḥ*: purification; *iti*: thus; *etat*: that is; *tapah*: austerity; *mānasam*: of the mind; *ucyate*: is said to be.

17.16 *Serenity of mind, gentleness, equanimity, self-control, and purity of thought are called austerity of thought.*

I Ō`mna`mVā\$VnnVpĒ{dY\$Za:V
A\ŠonH\$ŋ-{-^`P\$: gnpĒdH\$ n[aMj V 17

*śraddhayā parayā taptam tapas tat trividham naraiḥ |
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaih sāttvikam paricakṣate || 17.17*

śraddhayā: with sincerity; *parayā*: transcendental; *taptam*: execution; *tapas*: austerity; *tat*: that; *trividham*: three kinds; *naraiḥ*: by men; *aphalākāṅkṣibhiḥ*: without desires for fruits; *yuktaih*: engaged; *sāttvikam*: in the mode of goodness; *paricakṣate*: is called

17.17 The above mentioned threefold austerity (of thought, word, and deed), practiced by yogis with supreme sincerity, without a desire for the fruit, is said to be in the mode of goodness.

gĒH\$na_nZnDnW^VnnoXá^Z Mpd `V%
{H\$`VoV{Xh ànO\$ anOg\$Mb_Ynd_18

*satkāra māna pūjārtham tapo dambhena cai 'va yat |
kriyate tad iha proktaṁ rājasam calam adhruvam || 17.18*

satkāra: respect; *māna*: honor; *pūjārtham*: for worship; *tapah*: austerity; *dambhena*: pride; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *yat*: which is; *kriyate*: performed; *tat*: that; *iha*: in this world; *proktaṁ*: is said; *rājasam*: in the mode of aggression; *calam*: flickering; *adhruvam*: temporary

17.18 Austerity that is performed for gaining respect, honor, reverence, and for the sake of show, yielding an uncertain and temporary result, is said to be in the mode of aggression.

_J>nhbJnĒ_Zno`ĒnrS>m{H\$`VoVn:V%
nañ`nĕgnXZnW^dmVÎmn_g_iknöv_19Y

*mūḍhagrāheṇā 'tmano yat pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ |
parasyo tsādanārtham vā tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 17.19*

mūḍha: foolish; *grāheṇā*: with endeavor; *atmanah*: of one's own self; *yat*: which; *pīḍayā*: by torture; *kriyate*: is performed; *tapah*: penance; *parasya*: to others; *tsādanārtham*: causing annihilation; *vā*: or; *tat*: that; *tāmasam*: in the mode of darkness; *udāhṛtam*: is said to be

17.19 Austerity performed with foolish stubbornness or with self-torture or for harming others, is said to be in the mode of ignorance.

XmVî`_{V`ÔmZ\$Xr`VøZmH\$[aU&
XeoH\$[boM nmloM VÔmZ\$gmpIdH\$ñ_/_& 20

dātavyam iti yad dānam dīyate 'nupakāriṇe |
deśe kāle ca pātre ca tad dānam sātṭvikam smṛtam || 17.20

dātavyam: worth giving; iti: thus; yat: that which; dānam: charity; dīyate: given; anupakāriṇe: to person who does no service in return; deśe: in place; kāle: in time; ca: also; pātre: suitable person; ca: and; tat: that; dānam: charity; sātṭvikam: in the mode of goodness; smṛtam: consider

17.20 Charity that is given at the right place and time as a matter of duty to a deserving candidate who does nothing in return, is considered to be in the mode of goodness.

`ÎmāĒ`mH\$[anV^`\$b_ŦŦi`dmnZ:Ŧ
Xr`VoM n[ap\$bi\$VÔmZ\$[anOg\$ñ_/_& 21

yat tu pratyupakārārthaṁ phalam uddīśya vā punaḥ |
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam tad dānam rājasam smṛtam || 17.21

yat: that which; tu: but; pratyupakārārthaṁ: for the sake of getting some return; phalam: result; uddīśya: desiring; vā: or; punaḥ: again; dīyate: is given in charity; ca: also; parikliṣṭam: grudgingly; tat: that; dānam: charity; rājasam: in the mode of aggression; smṛtam: is understood to be

17.21 Charity that is given unwillingly or to get something in return or to gain some result is in the mode of aggression.

AXeH\$to`0nz_nml`ä`ü Xr`Vl
AgEH\$W_dknV\$VIm_g_Knöv_22

adeśakāle yad dānam apātrebhyaś ca dīyate |
asatkṛtam avajñātām tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 17.22

adeśa: unpurified place; *kāle*: unpurified time; *yat*: that which; *dānam*: charity; *apātrebhyaḥ*: to unworthy persons; *ca*: also; *dīyate*: is given; *asatkṛtam*: without respect; *avajñātām*: without proper attention; *tat*: that; *tāmasam*: in the mode of darkness; *udāhṛtam*: is said to be

17.22 Charity that is given at a wrong place and time to unworthy persons or without paying respect to the receiver or with ridicule is in the mode of ignorance.

AnfVĒg{X{V {ZX}emo~U{ó{dY: ñ_V:V
~m:-UnñVZ dXmü`kmü {d{hVm namV 23

aum tat sad iti nirdeśo brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ |
brāhmaṇas tena vedās ca yajñās ca vihitāḥ purā || 17.23

aum: indication of the Supreme; *tat*: that; *sat*: eternal; *iti*: that; *nirdeśaḥ*: indication; *brahmaṇaḥ*: of the Supreme; *trividhaḥ*: three kinds; *smṛtaḥ*: consider; *brāhmaṇaḥ*: the brahmaṇas; *tena*: therefore; *vedāḥ*: the vedic literature; *ca*: also; *yajñāḥ*: sacrifice; *ca*: also; *vihitāḥ*: used; *purā*: formerly

17. 23 ‘OM Tat Sat’ is said to be the threefold name of the eternal Being (Brahma). Persons with good (brahminic) qualities, the Vedas, and the selfless service (seva, yajña) were created by and from Brahma in the ancient time.

Vñ_nKnĒ_Ē`KnöĒ` `kXmZVn:{H\$`mV
àdVVo{dYmZmP\$m gVV\$~U{dmXZm_24

tasmād aum ity udāhṛtya yajña dāna tapaḥ kriyāḥ |
pravartante vidhānuktāḥ satatām brahmavādinām || 17.24

tasmāt: therefore; *aum*: beginning with om; *iti*: thus; *udāhṛtya*: indicating; *yajña*: sacrifice; *dāna*: charity; *tapah*: penance; *kriyāḥ*: performances; *pravartante*: begin; *vidhānoktāḥ*: according to scriptural regulation; *satatam*: always; *brahmavādinām*: of the transcendentalists

17.24 *Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity, and austerity prescribed in the scriptures are always commenced by uttering ‘OM’ by the knowers of the supreme Being.*

V{XĒ` Z{^g\$Ym̄ \ \$b\$` kVn:{H\$ m̄
XmZ{H\$ m̄ {d{dYm {H\$ YVo_m̄ H\$m̄-{-{^:V& 25Y

tad ity anabhisamdhāya phalaṁ yajña tapaḥ kriyāḥ |
dāna kriyāś ca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣakāṅkṣibhiḥ || 17.25

tat: that; *iti*: they; *anabhisamdhāya*: without fruitive result; *phalaṁ*: result of sacrifice; *yajña*: sacrifice; *tapah*: penance; *kriyāḥ*: activities; *dāna*: charity; *kriyāḥ*: activities; *ca*: also; *vividhāḥ*: varieties; *kriyante*: done; *mokṣakāṅkṣibhiḥ*: those who actually desire liberation.

17.25 *Various types of sacrifice, charity, and austerity are performed by the seekers of liberation by uttering ‘Tat’ (or He is all) without seeking a reward.*

gØmlogmYm̄m̄oM g{XĒ` VĒà` Ā` Vo&
àeñVoH\$_Ŧ VVm̄gÀNāX: nmV̄ Ā` V& 26

sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sad ity etat prayujyate |
praśaste karmaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate || 17.26

` koVn{g XmZoM pñW{V: g{X{V MnĀ` V&
H\$_Mpd VxWu` \$g{XĒ` dñr{^Yr` V& 27

*yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ sad iti co 'cyate |
karma cai 'va tadarthīyaṁ sad ity evā 'bhidhīyate || 17.27*

sadbhāve: in the sense of the nature of the Truth; *sādhubhāve*: in the sense of the nature of devotion; *ca*: also; *sat*: the Truth; *iti*: thus; *etat*: this; *prayujyate*: is used; *praśaste*: auspicious; *karmaṇi*: activities; *tathā*: also; *sacchabdaḥ*: the sound *sat*; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *yujyate*: is used; *yajñe*: sacrifice; *tapasi*: in penance; *dāne*: charity; *ca*: also; *sthitiḥ*: situated; *sat*: the Truth; *iti*: thus; *ca*: and; *ucyate*: pronounced; *karma*: work; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *tad*: that; *arthīyaṁ*: are meant; *sat*: Truth; *iti*: thus; *eva*: certainly; *abhidhīyate*: is called.

17.26,27 *The word 'Sat' is used in the sense of reality and goodness. The word 'Sat' is also used for an auspicious act, O Arjuna. Sincerity in sacrifice, charity, and austerity is also called 'Sat'. Selfless service for the sake of the supreme is, in truth, termed as 'Sat'.*

Al Ō`mhV\$XIn\$VnñVā\$H\$V\$M`V\$
Ag(XE`A`VonnWZ M VĒāĀ` ZmBhV& 28

*āsraddhayā hutam dattaṁ tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat |
asad ity ucyate pārtha na ca tat pretya no iha || 17.28*

āsraddhayā: without sincerity; *hutam*: offered in sacrifice; *dattaṁ*: given; *tapas*: penance; *taptam*: executed; *kṛtam*: performed; *ca*: also; *yat*: that which; *asad*: not Truth; *iti*: thus; *ucyate*: is said to be; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *na*: never; *ca*: also; *tat*: that; *pretya*: after death; *na*: nor; *iha*: in this life.

17. 28 *Whatever is done without sincerity whether it is sacrifice, charity, austerity, or any other act is called 'asad'. It has no value here or hereafter, O Arjuna.*

BfV I r_ØJdØrVngn{ZfĒgw~{dÚm n\$`mlemóo
I rH\$UnOĒg\$InKoi ŌmĀ`{d^m`mJmZm_gBVXenĀ`m ...V&

*iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde śraddhātraya vibhāga yogo nāma saptadaśo dhyāyaḥ ॥*

*In the **Upaniṣad** of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of **Brahman**, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the seventeenth discourse designated:*

Śraddhatraya vibhāga Yogaḥ

Verses Of Gita Chapter 18

AWA'ixenU`m`...

_mj g\$`mg`ml:

Mokṣa Sanyāsa Yogaḥ

AOE CdmY

g\$`mgñ`_hm-nhmVId{ANaf_dQXVw`
E`mlñ`M öfrHöe nW, Qe{ZfXZk& 1

arjuna uvāca

saṁnyāsasya mahābāho tattvam icchāmi veditum |
tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pr̥thak keśiniṣūdana || 18.1

arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; *saṁnyāsasya:* monkhood; *mahābāho:* O mighty-armed one; *tattvam:* truth; *icchāmi:* I wish; *veditum:* to understand; *tyāgasya:* of renunciation; *ca:* also; *hr̥ṣīkeśa:* O master of the senses; *pr̥thak:* differently; *keśiniṣūdana:* O killer of the Kesi demon

18.1 Arjuna said, 'Krishna, killer of the demon Kesi, I wish to understand what the purpose of renunciation is and about monkhood, and the difference between the two.'

I r ^JdnZmM

H\$ñ`nZnH\$_On\$`mg\$g\$`mg\$H\$d`no{dXw&
gdP\$_QoE`mJ\$amhE`mJ\${dMj Um& 2

śrī bhagavān uvāca

kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsaṁ saṁnyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ |
sarva karma phala tyāgam prāhuḥ tyāgam vicakṣaṇāḥ || 18.2

śrī bhagavān uvāca: Sri Bhagavān said; *kāmyānām:* with desire; *karmaṇām:* activities; *nyāsaṁ:* renunciation; *saṁnyāsaṁ:* renounced order of life; *kavayaḥ:* the learned; *viduḥ:* know; *sarva:* of all; *karma:* activities; *phala:* of results; *tyāgam:* renunciation; *prāhuḥ:* call; *tyāgam:* renunciation; *vicakṣaṇāḥ:* the experienced

18.2 Krishna said, the wise say that the purpose of monkhood as giving up all selfish work based on desire, and renunciation as the freedom from all attachment to the results of one's actions.

È`nÁ`\$Xmfd{XÈ`H\$`anhpZr{fU:~
`kXmZVn:H\$_ZÈ`nÁ`{V Mma~ 3

*tyājyaṁ doṣavad ity eke karma prāhur manīṣiṇaḥ |
yajña dāna tapaḥ karma na tyājyam iti cā 'pare || 18.3*

tyājyaṁ: must be given up; *doṣavad*: like sins; *iti*: thus; *eke*: one group; *karma*: work; *prāhuḥ*: said; *manīṣiṇaḥ*: of great thinkers; *yajña*: sacrifice or service; *dāna*: charity; *tapaḥ*: penance or austerity; *karma*: work; *na*: never; *tyājyam*: is to be given up; *iti*: thus; *ca*: certainly; *apare*: others

18.3 Some learned men say that all kinds of result-based activities are sins and should be given up, but there are yet other sages who maintain that acts of service, charity and austerity should never be given up.

{ZÜ`\$I\$Uw_oVÌÈ`mJo^aVgÎm_ &
È`mJm{h nēfi`nK«{Î{dY: gāàH\$V:~ 4

*nīścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra tyāge bharata sattama |
tyāgo hi puruṣa vyāghra trividhaḥ saṁprakīrtitaḥ || 18.4*

nīścayaṁ: certainty; *śṛṇu*: hear; *me*: from Me; *tatra*: there; *tyāge*: in the matter of renunciation; *bharata sattama*: O best of the Bharatas; *tyāgaḥ*: renunciation; *hi*: certainly; *puruṣa vyāghra*: O tiger among human beings; *trividhaḥ*: three kinds; *saṁprakīrtitaḥ*: is declared

18.4 Arjuna, here is what I say about renunciation. There are three kinds of renunciation explained.

niyatasya: prescribed duties; *tu*: but; *saṃnyāsaḥ*: renunciation; *karmanāḥ*: activities; *na*: never; *upapadyate*: is deserved; *mohāt*: by illusion; *tasya*: of which; *parityāgaḥ*: renunciation; *tāmasaḥ*: in the mode of ignorance; *parikīrtitaḥ*: is declared

18.7 Prescribed duties should never be renounced. If one gives up his prescribed duties through the illusion of renunciation, this is said to be in the state of ignorance.

duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāyakleśa bhayāt tyajet ।
sa kṛtvā rājāsaṁ tyāgaṁ nai 'va tyāgaphalaṁ labhet ॥ 18.8

*duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāyakleśa bhayāt tyajet ।
sa kṛtvā rājāsaṁ tyāgaṁ nai 'va tyāgaphalaṁ labhet ॥ 18.8*

duḥkham: unhappy; iti: thus; eva: certainly; yat: that which; karma: work; kāya: body; kleśa: troublesome; bhayāt: out of fear; tyajet: gives up; sa: that; kṛtvā: after doing; rājāsaṁ: in the mode of aggression; tyāgaṁ: renunciation; nai 'va: certainly not; tyāga: renounced; phalaṁ: results; labhet: gain

18.8 Anyone who gives up prescribed duties as troublesome, or out of fear, is said to be in the state of aggression, does not benefit from renunciation.

kāryam ity eva yat karma niyataṁ kriyate 'rjuna ।
saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalaṁ cai 'va sa tyāgaḥ sātṭvikaḥ mataḥ ॥ 18.9

*kāryam ity eva yat karma niyataṁ kriyate 'rjuna ।
saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalaṁ cai 'va sa tyāgaḥ sātṭvikaḥ mataḥ ॥ 18.9*

kāryam: must be done; iti: thus; eva: thus; yat: that which; karma: work; niyataṁ: prescribed; kriyate: performed; arjuna: O Arjuna; saṅgaṁ: association; tyaktvā: giving up; phalaṁ: result; ca: also; eva: certainly; saḥ: that; tyāgaḥ: renunciation; sātṭvikaḥ: in the mode of goodness; mataḥ: in My opinion.

18.9 But he who performs what is prescribed, as a matter of duty, without expectation or attachment to the results, his renunciation is of the nature of satva, goodness, O Arjuna.

na dvesti akuśalaṁ karma kuśale nā 'anuṣajjate |
 tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭo medhāvī chinnaśaṁsayah || 18.10

na dvesti akuśalaṁ karma kuśale nā 'anuṣajjate |
tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭo medhāvī chinnaśaṁsayah || 18.10

na: never; *dvesti:* hates; *akuśalaṁ:* inauspicious; *karma:* work; *kuśale:* in the auspicious; *na:* nor; *anuṣajjate:* becomes attached; *tyāgī:* the renouncer; *sattva:* goodness; *samāviṣṭaḥ:* absorbed in; *medhāvī:* intelligent; *chinna:* cut up; *śaṁsayah:* all doubts

18.10 Those who neither hate disagreeable work nor are attached to pleasant work are in a state of intelligence, goodness and renunciation, free of all doubts.

na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ |
 yas tu karmaphala tyāgī sa tyāgī 'ty abhidhīyate || 18.11

na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ |
yas tu karmaphala tyāgī sa tyāgī 'ty abhidhīyate || 18.11

na: never; *hi:* certainly; *dehabhṛtā:* of the embodied; *śakyaṁ:* possible; *tyaktuṁ:* to renounce; *karmāṇi:* activities of; *aśeṣataḥ:* altogether; *yas tu:* anyone who; *karma:* work; *phala:* results; *tyāgī:* renouncer; *sa tyāgī:* the renouncer; *iti:* thus; *abhidhīyate:* it is said

18.11 Human beings cannot give up all activities. Therefore the one who has renounced the fruits of such activity is one who has truly renounced.

aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśraṁ ca trividhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam |
 bhavaty atyāgināṁ pretya na tu saṁyāsinaṁ kvacit || 18.12

aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśraṁ ca trividhaṁ karmaṇaḥ phalam |
bhavaty atyāgināṁ pretya na tu saṁyāsinaṁ kvacit || 18.12

aniṣṭam: leading to hell; *iṣṭam:* leading to heaven; *miśraṁ ca:* or mixture; *trividhaṁ:* three kinds; *karmaṇaḥ:* work; *phalam:* result; *bhavati:* becomes; *atyāgināṁ:* of the renouncer; *pretya:* after death; *na tu:* but not; *saṁyāsinaṁ:* of the renounced order; *kvacit:* at any time

18.12 For one who is not renounced, the three kinds of fruits of action—desirable, undesirable and mixed—acrued after death, but not to one who has renounced.

n#mZ _hm-nhmH\$maUnZ {Z~mY _&
gmL>`oH\$VnVoàno\$Z {gÖ`ogdP\$ _Om_& 13

pañcai 'tāni mahābāho kāraṇāni nibodha me |
sāṁkhya kṛtānte proktāni siddhaye sarvakarmaṇām || 18.13

A{YöZ\$VWmH\$VnH\$aU\$M nWp/dY _&
[d{dYmü nW\$Mio`mXp\$Mpdml n#m_& 14

adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham |
vividhāś ca pṛthakceṣṭā daivaṁ cai 'vā 'tra pañcamam || 18.14

pañca: five; *etāni*: all these; *mahābāho*: O mighty-armed one; *kāraṇāni*: cause; *nibodha*: just understand; *me*: from Me; *sāṁkhya*: in the Sāṁkhya philosophy; *kṛtānte*: after performance; *proktāni*: said; *siddhaye*: perfection; *sarva*: all; *karmaṇām*: actuated. *adhiṣṭhānaṁ*: place; *tathā*: also; *kartā*: worker; *karaṇaṁ ca*: and instruments; *pṛthagvidham*: different kinds; *vividhāś ca*: varieties; *pṛthak*: separately; *ceṣṭā*: endeavor; *daivaṁ*: the supreme; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *atra*: here; *pañcamam*: five

18.13,14 Learn from Me Arjuna, the five causes that bring about the accomplishment of all action, as described in **Sāṁkhya** philosophy. These are: physical body that is the seat of action; the attributes of nature or **guṇa**, which is the doer; the eleven organs of perception and action by the life forces and finally the Divine.

earadnL>Znq^`P\$ _ama^VoZa:~&
Y`næ \$dm{dnarV\$dmn#mVoVn` hvd:~& 15

śarīravānmanobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ ।
nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā pañcai 'te tasya hetavaḥ ॥ 18.15

śarīra: body; vān: speech; manobhiḥ: by the mind; yat: anything; karma: work; prārabhate: begins; naraḥ: a person; nyāyyaṁ: right; vā: or; viparītaṁ: the opposite; vā: or; pañca: five; ete: all these; tasya: its; hetavaḥ: causes

18.15 These five factors are responsible for whatever right or wrong actions a man performs by deed, word and thought.

VIḍḡg{V H\$Vnā_nĒ_mZ\$Hdb\$Vw` :&
nī`Ē`H\$V~(ÖEdmP g nī`{V Xw`V:&& 16

tatrai 'vam sati kartāram ātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ ।
paśyaty akṛta buddhitvān na sa paśyati durmatīḥ ॥ 18.16

tatra: there; evam: certainly; sati: being; kartāram: of the worker; ātmānaṁ: the self; kevalaṁ: only; tu: but; yaḥ: anyone; paśyati: sees; akṛta buddhitvān: due to unintelligence; na: never; saḥ: he; paśyati: sees; durmatīḥ: foolish

18.16 Those who think they, their spirit, are the doers, are ignorant and do not see things as they are.

`ñ` Znh\$Vno^mclno~(Ö`R` Z {bB`V&
hĒdm{n g B_m; nbl\$ntP hp{V Z {Z~Ü`V&& 17

yasya nā 'haṁkṛto bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate ।
hatvā 'pi sa imāṁl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate ॥ 18.17

yasya: of one who; nā: never; ahaṁkṛtaḥ: ego; bhāvaḥ: nature; buddhiḥ: intelligence; yasya: one who; na: never; lipyate: is attached; hatvā 'pi: even killing; saḥ: he; imāṁḥ: this; lokān: world; na: never; hanti: kills; na: never; nibadhyate: becomes entangled

18.17 One who is egoless, whose intelligence is not of attachment, though he may kill, is not the slayer and is never bound by his actions.

knZ\$ko \$n[akm/m{I{dYmH\$ 18
H\$aU\$H\$_H\$V{I{dY: H\$_g\$ 18

jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ pariñātā trividhā karmacodanā I
karaṇaṁ karma karte 'ti trividhaḥ karmasaṁgrahaḥ II 18.18

jñānaṁ: knowledge; *jñeyaṁ*: objective; *pariñātā*: the knower; *trividhā*: three kinds; *karma*: work; *codanā*: impetus; *karaṇaṁ*: the senses; *karmā*: work; *kartā*: the doer; *iti*: thus; *trividhaḥ*: three kinds; *karma*: work; *saṁgrahaḥ*: accumulation

18.18 Knowledge, object of the knowledge and the subject of the knowledge, the knower, are the three factors that stimulate action; the senses, the action and the performer comprise the three components of action.

knZ\$H\$_M H\$VmM {IYd Jw^KV: 19
àM`VoJwGL`mZo`WmdANJwVn`{n 19

jñānaṁ karma ca kartā ca tridhai 'va guṇabhedataḥ I
procyate guṇasaṅkhyāne yathāvac chṛṇu tāny api II 18.19

jñānaṁ: knowledge; *karma*: work; *ca*: also; *kartā*: worker; *ca*: also; *tridha*: three kinds; *eva*: certainly; *guṇabhedataḥ*: in terms of different modes of material nature; *procyate*: is said; *guṇasaṅkhyāne*: in terms of different modes; *yathāvat*: as they act; *śṛṇu*: hear; *tāni*: all of them; *api*: also

18.19 According to the science of guṇas, there are three types in knowledge, action, and performers of action. Listen as I describe them.

gd°VfW`zH\$^nd_i`_rj V 20
A{d^°\$ {d^°\$fVAKnZ\$ {d{Ö gmpdH\$ 20

sarvabhūteṣu yenai 'kaṁ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate I
avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu taj jñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikam II 18.20

sarvabhūteṣu: in all living entities; yena: by whom; ekaṁ: one; bhāvam: situation; avyayam: imperishable; īkṣate: does see; avibhaktaṁ: undivided; vibhakteṣu: in the numberless divided; tat: that; jñānaṁ: knowledge; viddhi: know; sāttvikam: in the mode of goodness

18.20 That knowledge by which one imperishable reality is seen in all Existence, undivided in the divided, is knowledge in the state of goodness.

nWŠEdž Vw` ÁknZŠZnZm^mclmWpklYnZ`
d{Imgd}fw^yfwVÁknZš{d{Ö anOg_` 21

*pr̥thaktvena tu yaj jñānaṁ nānābhāvān pr̥thagvidhān |
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu taj jñānaṁ viddhi rājasam || 18.21*

pr̥thaktvena: because of division; tu: but; yaj jñānaṁ: which knowledge; nānābhāvān: various situations; pr̥thagvidhān: differently; vetti: one who knows; sarveṣu: in all; bhūteṣu: living entities; taj jñānaṁ: that knowledge; viddhi: must be known; rājasam: in terms of aggression

18.21 The knowledge by which one sees different realities of various types among all beings as separate from one another; such knowledge is in the mode of aggression.

`ÎmWHĒgdXbšpñ_YHšm }g°\$ _hVWt\$`
AVÎdnW@Xën\$M VÎm_g_KnôV_` 22

*yat tu kṛtsnavat ekasmin kārye saktam ahaitukam |
atattvārthavad alpaṁ ca tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 18.22*

yat: that which; tu: but; kṛtsnavat: all in all; ekasmin: in one; kārye: work; saktam: attached; ahaitukam: without cause; atattvārthavat: without reality; alpaṁ: very meager; ca: and; tat: that; tāmasam: in the mode of darkness; udāhṛtam: is spoken

18.22 The irrational, baseless, and worthless knowledge by which one clings to one single effect as if it is everything, such knowledge is in the mode of darkness of ignorance.

{Z`V\$g“a(hV_auŪfV: H\$V_&
A\šbàŋgŷm H\$ © ĪnĒgnpĪdH\$_Ā`V&& 23Ÿ

*niyataṁ saṅgarahitam arāgadveṣataḥ kṛtam ।
aphalaprepsunā karma yat tat sāttvikam ucyate ॥ 18.23*

niyataṁ: regulative; *saṅgarahitam*: without attachment; *arāgadveṣataḥ*: without love or hatred; *kṛtam*: done; *aphalaprepsunā*: without fruitive result; *karma*: acts; *yat*: which; *tat*: that; *sāttvikam*: in the mode of goodness; *ucyate*: is called

18.23 Obligatory duty performed without likes and dislikes and without selfish motives and attachment to the fruit, is in the mode of goodness.

`ĪmH\$m ŋgŷm H\$_gnh\$H\$mŪ dmnŷ:ŷ&
{H\$ Vo~hŷm ng\$VĐnOg_ĪnŌV_&& 24

*yat tu kāmepsunā karma sāhaṁkāreṇa vā punaḥ ।
kriyate bahulāyāsaṁ tad rājasam udāhṛtam ॥ 18.24*

yat: that which; *tu*: but; *kāmepsunā*: with fruitive result; *karma*: work; *sāhaṁkāreṇa*: with ego; *vā*: or; *punaḥ*: again; *kriyate*: performed; *bahulāyāsaṁ*: with great labor; *tat*: that; *rājasam*: in the mode of passion; *udāhṛtam*: is said to be

18.24 Action performed with ego, with selfish motives, and with too much effort, is in the mode of aggression.

AZwYŸj`š(h\$gm Znŵ` M nnpf_&
nnnKmaä`VoH\$© ĪmĪnn_g_Ā`V&& 25

*anubandhaṁ kṣayaṁ himsām anapekṣya ca pauraṣam ।
mohād ārabhyate karma yat tat tāmasam ucyate ॥ 18.25*

anubandhaṁ: future bondage; *kṣayaṁ*: destruction; *himsām*: violence; *anapekṣya*: without consideration of consequences; *ca*: also; *pauraṣam*: distressing to others; *mohāt*: by illusion; *ārabhyate*: begun; *karma*: work; *yat*: which; *tat*: that; *tāmasam*: in the mode of ignorance; *ucyate*: is said to be

18.25 Action that is undertaken because of delusion, disregarding consequences, loss, injury to others, as well as one's own ability, is in the mode of ignorance.

—p\$g"mēZh\$lnKr YĒ`ŕignhg_pŕdV:ŕ
{gŌç(gŌçmZŕP\$ma: H\$VmŕgmŕdH\$ CĀ`Vŕ& 26

*muktasaṅgo 'anahamvādī dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ |
siddhyasiddhyor nirvikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate || 18.26*

muktasaṅgaḥ: liberated from all material association; *anahamvādī*: without false ego; *dhṛtyutsāha*: with great enthusiasm; *samanvitaḥ*: qualified in that way; *siddhi*: perfection; *asiddhyoḥ*: failure; *nirvikāraḥ*: without change; *kartā*: worker; *sāttvikaḥ*: in the mode of goodness; *ucyate*: is said to be

18.26 The performer who is free from attachment, non-egotistic, endowed with resolve and enthusiasm, and unperturbed in success or failure is called sātvika.

amJr H\$`\$bālglobŕmŕqhgñĒ_H\$neŕM:ŕ
hfēmbŕpŕdV: H\$VmŕanOg: n[aH\$ŕVŕ:ŕ& 27ŕ

*rāgī karmaphalaprepsur lubdho himsātmako 'śuciḥ |
harṣaśokānvitaḥ kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ || 18.27*

rāgī: very much attached; *karmaphala*: to the fruit of the work; *prepsuḥ*: desiring; *lubdhaḥ*: greedy; *himsātmakaḥ*: and always envious; *aśuciḥ*: unclean; *harṣaśokānvitaḥ*: complicated, with joy and sorrow; *kartā*: such a worker; *rājasah*: in the mode of passion; *parikīrtitaḥ*: is declared

18.27 The performer who is impassioned, who desires the fruits of work, who is greedy, violent, impure, and affected by joy and sorrow, is called aggressive.

A`P\$: ànH\$V: nVàY: eRmZiH\$VH\$og:~
{dfmKr XrK\$g}r M H\$VnV_m_g CÀ`V\$ 28

*ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭha naiṣkṛtiko 'lasaḥ |
viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca kartā tāmāsa ucyate || 18.28*

ayuktaḥ: without reference to scriptural injunctions; *prākṛtaḥ*: materialistic; *stabdhaḥ*: obstinate; *śaṭhaḥ*: deceitful; *naiṣkṛtikaḥ*: expert in insulting others; *alasaḥ*: lazy; *viṣādī*: morose; *dīrghasūtrī*: procrastinating; *ca*: also; *kartā*: worker; *tāmāsa*: in the mode of ignorance; *ucyate*: is said to be

18.28 The performer who is undisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, malicious, lazy, depressed, and procrastinating is called ignorant or tamasic.

~Ö\$X\$YVüpd JUV{ó{dY\$eU~
ànA`_mZ_eU nVŠEdZ YZÄO` 29

*buddher bhedaṁ dhrteś ca 'va guṇatas trividhaṁ śṛṇu |
procyamānam aśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya || 18.29*

buddheḥ: of intelligence; *bhedaṁ*: differences; *dhrteḥ*: of steadiness; *ca*: also; *eva*: certainly; *guṇataḥ*: by the modes of material nature; *trividhaṁ*: the three kinds of; *śṛṇu*: just hear; *procyamānam*: as described by Me; *aśeṣeṇa*: in detail; *pṛthaktvena*: differently; *dhanañjaya*: O winner of wealth

18.29 Now hear Me explain, fully and separately, the threefold division of intellect and resolve, based on modes of material Nature, O Arjuna.

ädYIn\$M {ZdYImM H\$m nP\$m}^`m^`~
~Y\$~nj \$M`mdYIm~Ö: gmnWgmpIdH\$ 30

*pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca kāryakārye bhayābhaye |
bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī || 18.30*

pravṛttiḥ: the path of work; *ca*: also; *nivṛttiḥ*: the path of renunciation; *ca*: and; *kārya*: work that is to be done; *akārye*: prohibited action; *bhaya*: fearful; *abhaye*: fearlessness; *bandhaḥ*: obligation; *mokṣaṁ ca*: and liberation; *yā*: that which; *vetti*: knows; *buddhiḥ*: understanding; *sā*: that; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *sāttvikī*: in the mode of goodness

18.30 O Arjuna, that intellect is in the mode of goodness which understands the path of work and the path of renunciation, right and wrong action, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation.

ययै धर्मं अधर्मं च कार्यं चाकृत्यमिव
अयथावत् प्राजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्था राजसी ॥ १८.३०

yayā dharmam adharmaṁ ca kāryaṁ cā 'kāryam eva ca /
ayathāvat prajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī || 18.31

yayā: by which; *dharmam*: right conduct; *adharmaṁ*: what is not right conduct; *ca*: and; *kāryaṁ*: work; *ca*: also; *akāryam*: what ought not to be done; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: also; *ayathāvat*: not perfectly; *prajānāti*: knows; *buddhiḥ*: intelligence; *sā*: that; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *rājasī*: in the mode of passion

18.31 That intellect is in the mode of passion that cannot distinguish between principles of right conduct and wrong doing, and right and wrong action, O Arjuna.

अधर्मं धर्मं इति या मन्यते तमासा आवृता
सर्वार्थान विपरितामस बुद्धिः सा पार्था तामसी ॥ १८.३१

adharmaṁ dharmam iti yā manyate tamasā 'vṛtā /
sarvārthān viparītāmaś ca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī || 18.32

adharmaṁ: what is not right conduct; *dharmam*: right conduct; *iti*: thus; *yā*: which; *manyate*: thinks; *tamasā*: by ignorance; *avṛtā*: covered; *sarvārthān*: all things; *viparītām*: the wrong direction; *ca*: also; *buddhiḥ*: intelligence; *sā*: that; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *tāmasī*: the mode of ignorance

18.32 *That intellect is in the mode of ignorance that accepts unrighteousness as righteousness and thinks everything to be that which it is not, O Arjuna.*

Yĕ` m` ` m Yna` Vo_Z: ànUpŲD` {H\$ mĕ
` nŲZm` {^Mn[aĒ` m YĕV: gmnnW©gmŲdH\$ĕ& 33

dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate manah prāṇendriya kriyāḥ |
yogena 'vyabhicāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī || 18.33

dhṛtyā: determination; *yayā*: by which; *dhārayate*: continued; *manah*: mind; *prāṇa*: life energy; *indriya*: senses; *kriyāḥ*: activities; *yogena*: uniting with God; *avyabhicāriṇyā*: without any break; *dhṛtiḥ*: such determination; *sā*: that; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *sāttvikī*: in the mode of goodness

18.33 *Consistent and continuous determination in controlling the mind, breath and senses for uniting with the Divine is goodness, Arjuna*

` ` m VwY_P\$ n nVnPYĕ` m Yna` VoOŲĕ
àg"Ų \ \$onH\$ŲLŲ r YĕV: gmnnW©anOgrĕ& 34

yayā tu dharma kāmāsthān dhṛtyā dhārayate 'rjuna |
prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī || 18.34

yayā: by which; *tu*: but; *dharma kāmāsthān*: for the three goals in life, right conduct, sense pleasure and wealth; *dhṛtyā*: by determination; *dhārayate*: continuously; *arjuna*: O Arjuna; *prasaṅgena*: for that; *phalākāṅkṣī*: desiring fruitive results; *dhṛtiḥ*: determination; *sā*: that; *pārtha*: O son of Pritha; *rājasī*: in the mode of passion

18.34 *Craving for results of action while clinging to goals of proper conduct, pleasure and wealth is the state of passion.*

` ` mndn\$^` \$enb\$ {dfnX\$X_d Mĕ
Z {d_#mŲ Xw_YmYĕV: gmnnW©Vm_grĕ& 35

yayā swapnaṁ bhayaṁ śokaṁ viśādaṁ madam eva ca |
na vimuñcati durmedhā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmāsī || 18.35

yayā: by which; swapnaṁ: dream; bhayaṁ: fearfulness; śokaṁ: lamentation; viśādaṁ: moroseness; madam: delusion; eva: certainly; ca: also; na: never; vimuñcati: is liberated; durmedhā: unintelligent; dhṛtiḥ: determination; sā: that; pārtha: O son of Pritha; tāmāsī: in the mode of ignorance

18.35 Ignorant resolve which cannot go beyond dreaming, fear, grief, despair and, delusion—such is in darkness, Arjuna.

gṛṣṇā dṛṣṭvā tū | dṛṣṭvā tū | dṛṣṭvā tū |
Aā`mgnD_Vo`Ī XwI nV\$M {ZJĀN\$V\$ 36

sukhaṁ tv idānīm trividhaṁ śṛṇu me bharataṣabha |
abhyāsād ramate yatra duḥkhāntaṁ ca nigacchati || 18.36

`ĪnXJø{df{d n[aUm_@_Vnm_&
VĒgn \$gmpIdH\$ anP\$_nĒ_~(ŌagnKO_& 37

yat tad agre viṣaṁ iva pariṇāme 'mṛtopamam |
tat sukhaṁ sāttvikam proktam ātmabuddhiprasādaḥ || 18.37

sukhaṁ: happiness; tu: but; idānīm: now; trividhaṁ: three kinds; śṛṇu: hear; me: from Me; bharataṣabha: O best amongst the Bharatas; abhyāsāt: by practice; ramate: enjoyer; yatra: where; duḥkha: distress; antaṁ: end; ca: also; nigacchati: gains; yat: that which; tat: that; agre: in the beginning; viṣaṁ iva: like poison; pariṇāme: at the end; amṛta: nectar; upamam: compared to; tat: that; sukhaṁ: happiness; sāttvikam: in the mode of goodness; proktam: is said; ātma: self; buddhi: intelligence; prasādaḥ: satisfactory

18.36,37 And now hear from Me, O Arjuna, about three kinds of pleasure. The pleasure that one enjoys from spiritual practice results in cessation of all sorrows. The pleasure that appears as poison in the beginning, but is like nectar in the end, comes by the grace of Self-knowledge and is in the mode of goodness.

{df`pYD`g\$ nblmUÎnXJ@_V/mn__&
n[aUm_o{df{d VÊgW \$anOg\$ñ_V_&& 38

*viṣayendriyasamyogad yat tad agre 'mr̥topamam |
pariṇāme visam iva tat sukhaṁ rājasam smṛtam || 18.38*

viṣaya: objects of the senses; indriya: senses; samyogat: combination; yat: which; tat: that; agre: in the beginning; amṛtopamam: just like nectar; pariṇāme: at the end; visam iva: like poison; tat: that; sukhaṁ: happiness; rājasam: in the mode of passion; smṛtam: is considered

18.38 Sensual pleasures that appear as nectar in the beginning, but become poison in the end, are in the mode of passion.

`XJøMmZw-ŸYoM gW \$ _nlnZ_nĕ_Z:~&
{ZÐmbñ`à_nXñW\$VÎmn_g_iknöv_&& 39

*yad agre cā 'nubandhe ca sukhaṁ mohanam ātmanaḥ |
nidrālasya pramādotthaṁ tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || 18.39*

yat: that which; agre: in the beginning; ca: also; anubandhe: by binding; ca: also; sukhaṁ: happiness; mohanam: illusion; ātmanaḥ: of the self; nidrā: sleeping; ālasya: laziness; pramāda: illusion; utthaṁ: produced of; tat: that; tāmasam: in the mode of ignorance; udāhṛtam: is said to be

18.39 Pleasure that is delusion from beginning to end and born out of sleep, laziness and illusion is said to be of the nature of ignorance.

Z VxpñV nŸWi`n\$dm{X{d XøfwdmnZ:~&
gÎd\$àH\$VO;P\$`Xq^: ñ`mĒÎ{^JØ;~& 40

*na tad asti pṛthivyām vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ |
sattvaṁ prakṛtijair muktaṁ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ || 18.40*

na: not; *tad*: that; *asti*: there is; *prthivyām*: within the universe; *vā*: or; *divi*: in the higher planetary system; *deveṣu*: amongst the demigods; *vā*: or; *punaḥ*: again; *sattvaṁ*: existence; *prakṛtijaiḥ*: under the influence of material nature; *muktaṁ*: liberated; *yat*: that; *ebhiḥ*: by this; *syāt*: so becomes; *tribhiḥ*: by three; *guṇaiḥ*: modes of material nature

18.40 *No one, either here or among the celestials in the higher planetary systems, is free from these three states of material nature.*

~m=Uj {l`{denfepmUn\$M naVn&
H\$_m@U à{d^°\$mZ ñd^mdà^dJ@j. 41

brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśāṁ śūdrāṇāṁ ca param̐tapa |
karmāṇi pravibhaktāni svabhāvaprabhavair guṇaiḥ || 18.41

brāhmaṇa: the *brāhmaṇas*; *kṣatriya*: the *kṣatriyas*; *visāṁ*: the *vaiśyas*; *śūdrāṇāṁ*: the *śūdras*; *ca*: and; *param̐tapa*: O subduer of the enemies; *karmāṇi*: activities; *pravibhaktāni*: are divided; *svabhāva*: own nature; *prabhavaiḥ*: born of; *guṇaiḥ*: by the modes of material nature

18.41 *Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras are divided in the work they do based on their nature, Arjuna.*

e_noX_nVn: enm\$ j npVnO@_d M&
knZ\$(dkmZ_mnVŠ` \$~@H\$_ñd^mdO_ 42

śamaḥ damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca |
jñānaṁ vijñānaṁ āstikyaṁ brahmakarma svabhāvajaṁ || 18.42

śamaḥ: peacefulness; *damaḥ*: self-control; *tapaḥ*: austerity; *śaucaṁ*: purity; *kṣāntiḥ*: tolerance; *ārjavam*: honesty; *eva*: certainly; *ca*: and; *jñānaṁ*: knowledge; *vijñānaṁ*: wisdom; *āstikyaṁ*: belief in God; *brahma*: of a brahmana; *karma*: duty; *svabhāvajaṁ*: born of his own nature

18.42 *The nature of Brāhmaṇa is characterized by their calmness, discipline, austerity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and belief in God.*

enṁ 'VOnoYVXnē` \$` ōOmB` nbm̐ Z_Ṛ
XnZ_ rcea^mdÜ j m̐ \$H\$_ēd^mdO_Ṛ 43

*śauryaṁ tejo dhṛtir dākṣyaṁ yuddhe cā 'py apalāyanam |
dānam īśvarabhāvaś ca kṣātraṁ karma svabhāvajam || 18.43*

śauryaṁ: heroism; *tejah*: power; *dhṛtir*: determination; *dākṣyaṁ*: resourcefulness; *yuddhe*: in battle; *ca*: and; *api*: also; *apalāyanam*: not fleeing; *dānam*: generosity; *īśvara*: leadership; *bhāvaḥ*: nature; *ca*: and; *kṣātraṁ*: kṣatriya; *karma*: duty; *svabhāvajam*: born of his own nature

18.43 Kṣatriya are characterized by their qualities of heroism, vigor, firmness, dexterity, steadfastness in battle, leadership and generosity.

H\$ fJmū` dñ(UÁ` \$dī` H\$_ēd^mdO_Ṛ
n[aM` nĒ_H\$ H\$_ēdñ` nñ nĎ^mdO_Ṛ 44

*kṛṣi gaurakṣya vāṇijyaṁ vaiśyakarma svabhāvajam |
paricaryātmakaṁ karma śūdrasyā api śvabhāvajam || 18.44*

kṛṣi: plowing; *gaurakṣyam*: protecting cows; *vāṇijyaṁ*: trade; *vaiśya*: vaiśyas; *karma*: duty; *svabhāvajam*: born of his own nature; *paricaryā*: service; *atmakam*: nature; *karma*: duty; *śūdrasyā*: of the śūdra; *api*: also; *svabhāvajam*: born of his own nature

18.44 Those who are good at cultivation, cattle rearing, and trade are known as **Vaiśya**. Those who are very good in service are classed as **śūdra**.

ñdoñdoH\$_ē {^aV: g\$ggō b^VoZa:Ṛ
ñdH\$_ēZaV: {ggō `Wm{dYX{V VÂNṚ 45

*sve sve karmaṇi abhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ |
svakarmanirataḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tac chṛṇu || 18.45*

sve: own; *sve*: own; *karmaṇi*: in work; *abhirataḥ*: following; *saṁsiddhiṁ*: perfection; *labhate*: achieves; *naraḥ*: a man; *svakarma*: by his own duty; *nirataḥ*: engaged; *siddhiṁ*: perfection; *yathā*: as; *vindati*: attains; *tat*: that; *śṛṇu*: listen

18.45 One can attain the highest perfection by devotion to one's natural work. Listen to Me how one attains perfection while engaged in one's natural work.

Y: àdñm^PmZn\$ z gd©X\$VV_&
ñdH\$_9mV_ä`À`Qg{Ö\$(dYX(V_mZd:W& 46

yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām yena sarvam idaṁ tatam ।
svakarmaṇā tam abhyarcya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ ॥ 18.46

yataḥ: from whom; pravṛttiḥ: the emanation; bhūtānām: of all living entities; yena: by whom; sarvam: all; idaṁ: this; tatam: is pervaded; svakarmaṇā: in his own duties; tam: Him; abhyarcya: by worshiping; siddhiṁ: perfection; vindati: achieves; mānavaḥ: a man

18.46 One attains perfection by worshipping the supreme Being from whom all beings originate and by whom all this universe is pervaded through performance of one's natural duty for Him.

I ò mñdY_m){dJW: naY_nñdZ{öVnV&
ñd^md{Z`V\$H\$_HñdPmZnV {H\$pe~f_& 47

śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt ।
svabhāvanīyataṁ karma kurvan nā 'pnoti kilbiṣam ॥ 18.47

śreyān: better; svadharmāḥ: one's own rightful conduct; viguṇaḥ: imperfectly performed; paradharmāt: another's conduct; svanuṣṭhitāt: perfectly done; svabhāvanīyataṁ: prescribed duties according to one's nature; karma: work; kurvan: performing; na: never; āpnoti: achieve; kilbiṣam: sinful reactions

18.47 It is better to engage in one's rightful conduct, even though one may not perform it to perfection, rather than to accept another's conduct and perform it perfectly. Duties prescribed according to one's nature, are never affected by sinful reactions.

ghO\$H\$ QH\$Vô gXmf_{n Z È`OV
gdma^m{h XmfU Yy_2m3[admdVm&& 48

*sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣam api na tyajet |
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenā 'gnir ivā 'vṛtāḥ || 18.48*

sahajaṁ: born simultaneously; *karma*: work; *kaunteya*: O son of Kunti; *sadoṣam*: with fault; *api*: although; *na*: never; *tyajet*: to be given up; *sarvārambhāḥ*: any venture; *hi*: certainly; *doṣeṇa*: with fault; *dhūmenā*: with smoke; *agniḥ*: fire; *iva* as; *āvṛtāḥ*: covered

18.48 Every work has some defect, just as fire is covered by smoke. One should not give up the work that is born of his own nature, even if such work is full of fault, Arjuna.

Ag°\$-fō...gdP {OVnē_m{dJVñnñ:~
ZiH\$`gqō na_nsgf`ngzm(YJAN\$V&& 49

*asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra jītātmā vigatasprhaḥ |
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṁ paramāṁ samnyāsenā 'dhigacchati || 18.49*

asaktabuddhiḥ: unattached intelligence; *sarvatra*: everywhere; *jītātmā*: control of the mind; *vigatasprhaḥ*: without material desires; *naiṣkarmyasiddhiḥ*: perfection of non-reaction; *paramāḥ*: supreme; *saṁnyāsenā*: by the renounced order of life; *adhigacchati*: attains

18.49 One whose mind is always free from selfish attachment, who has controlled the mind and who is free from desires, he, by renunciation, attains perfection of freedom from selfish attachment to the fruits of work.

{gqō ànāno`Wm~«- VWnBZnV {Z~nV`_~
g_ngzd H\$Vô {ZōmkZñ`~`mnam&& 50

*siddhiṁ prāpto yathā brahma tathā 'pnoti nibodha me |
samāsenai 'va kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā || 18.50*

siddhiṁ: perfection; *prāptaḥ*: achieving; *yathā*: as; *brahma*: the supreme; *tathā*: so; *apnoti*: achieves; *nibodha*: try to understand; *me*: from Me; *samāsenai*: summarily; *eva*:

18.50 Understand from Me how one can achieve the state of Truth, Brahman, by acting in the way I shall now summarize, Arjuna.

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhr̥tyā 'tmānaṁ niyamy ca |
śabādīn viśayāṁś tyaktvā rāga dveṣau vyudasya ca || 18.51

viviktasevī laghvāśī yataṁvākkāyamānasah ।
dhyānayogaparo nityam vairāgyam samupāśritah ॥ 18.52

*aḥaṁkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigrahaṁ ।
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto brahmabhūyāya kalpate ॥ 18.53*

buddhyā: by the intelligence; *viśuddhayā*: fully purified; *yuktaḥ*: such engagement; *dhr̥tyā*: determination; *atmānaṁ*: self; *niyāmya*: regulated; *ca*: also; *śabdādīn*: the sense objects, such as sound, etc.; *viśayāṁ*: sense objects; *tyaktvā*: giving up; *rāga*: attachment; *dveṣau*: hatred; *vyudasya*: having laid aside; *ca*: also; *viviktasevī*: living in a secluded place; *laghvāśī*: eating a small quantity; *yatavāk*: control of speech; *kāya*: body; *mānasaḥ*: control of the mind; *dhyānayogaparaḥ*: always absorbed in trance; *nityaṁ*: twenty-four hours a day; *vairāgyaṁ*: detachment; *samupāśritaḥ*: taken shelter of; *ahamkāraṁ*: false ego; *balaṁ*: false strength; *darpaṁ*: false pride; *kāmaṁ*: lust; *krodhaṁ*: anger; *parigrahaṁ*: acceptance of material things; *vimucya*: being delivered; *nirmamaḥ*: without proprietorship; *sāntaḥ*: peaceful; *brahmabhūyāya*: to become self-realized; *kalpate*: is understood

18.51,52,53 Endowed with purified intellect; subduing the mind with firm resolve; turning away from the objects of senses; giving up likes and dislikes; living in solitude; eating lightly; controlling the mind, speech, and organs of action; ever absorbed in meditation; taking refuge in detachment; and relinquishing egotism, violence, pride, lust, anger, and proprietorship, one becomes peaceful, free from the notion of "I" and "mine", and fit for attaining oneness with the supreme Being.

~^V: àgPñē_mZ enM{V Z H\$ñL_3 {V&
g_: gdfñ^Vfñ_Øq°\$ b^Vonam_ 54

brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati |
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu madbhaktiṁ labhate parām || 18.54

brahmabhūtaḥ: being one with the Absolute; prasannātmā: fully joyful; na: never; śocati: laments; na: never; kāṅkṣati: desires; samaḥ: equally disposed; sarveṣu: all; bhūteṣu: living entities; madbhaktiṁ: My devotion; labhate: gains; parām: transcendental

18.54 Absorbed in the supreme Being, the serene one neither grieves nor desires. Becoming impartial to all beings, one obtains My highest devotional love.

^ŠV`m_m_{^OmZñV `ndñŸ`Üññ_ VîdV:V
VVno_rñVîdVnoññdm{deVoVXZîVa_ 55

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cā 'smi tattvataḥ |
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tadanantaram || 18.55

bhaktyā: by pure devotional service; mām: Me; abhijānāti: one can know; yāvān: as much as; yaś cā 'smi: as I am; tattvataḥ: in truth; tataḥ: thereafter; mām: Me; tattvataḥ: by truth; jñātvā: knowing; viśate: enters; tadanantaram: thereafter

18.55 By devotion one truly understands what and who I am in essence. Having known Me in essence, one immediately merges with Me.

gdP\$ nE {n gXmHdndno_Ü` nml `:V
_ÈagnXmKdnBZnV enoeV\$ñX_i` ` 56

sarvakarmāṇy api sadā kurvāṇo madvyapāśrayaḥ |
matprasādād avāpnoti śāśvataṁ padam avyayam || 18.56

sarva: all; karmāṇi: activities; api: although; sadā: always; kurvāṇaḥ: performing; mat: under My; vyapāśrayaḥ: protection; mat: My; prasādāt: mercy; avāpnoti: achieves; śāśvataṁ: eternal; padam: abode; avyayam: imperishable

18.56 My devotee occupied in everyday life still reaches under My protection the imperishable ultimate abode through my mercy, through devotion to Me.

MVgmgdP\$ nE { g\$`ñ`_Èna:V
~(Ö`nd_mnf|È`_{fÎm gVVS^dV 57

cetasā sarvakarmāṇi mayi samnyasya matparaḥ |
buddhiyogam upāśritya maccittaḥ satataṁ bhava || 18.57

cetasā: by intelligence; sarvakarmāṇi: all kinds of activities; mayi: unto Me; samnyasya: giving up; matparaḥ: My protection; buddhiyogam: devotional activities; upāśritya: taking shelter of; maccittaḥ: consciousness; satataṁ: always; bhava: just become

18.57 While being engaged in activities just depend upon Me, and being fully conscious of Me, work always under My protection.

_fÎm gdP\$ nE { g\$`ñ`_Èna:V
AW Mōd_hf\$ñanP I nō {g {dZL` {gV 58

maccittaḥ sarvadurgāṇi matprasādāt tariṣyasi |
atha cet tvam ahaṁkārān na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi || 18.58

mat: My; cittaḥ: consciousness; sarva: all; durgāṇi: impediments; mat: My; prasādāt: My mercy; tariṣyasi: you will overcome; atha: therefore; cet: if; tvam: you; ahaṁkārāt: by false ego; na: not; śroṣyasi: do not hear; vinaṅkṣyasi: then lose yourself

18.58 *When your mind becomes fixed on Me, you shall overcome all difficulties by My grace. But if you do not listen to Me due to ego, you shall perish.*

ḥLḥmḥI È` Z`nñ` B{V`_Y`gḥ
{_I`f`i`dgmñVoàHḥVñEdḥ{Z`mú`{Vḥ 59

yad ahamkāram āśritya na yotsya iti manyase ।
mithyai 'śa vyavasāyas te prakṛtis tvām niyokṣyati ॥ 18.59

yat: therefore; ahamkāram: false ego; āśritya: taking shelter; na: not; yotsye: shall fight; iti: thus; manyase: think; mithyai 'śa: this is all false; vyavasāyas te: your determination; prakṛtiḥ: material nature; tvām: you; niyokṣyati: will engage you

18.59 *If due to ego you think: 'I shall not fight,' your resolve is useless, and your own nature will compel you.*

ñd^mdOz HḥVò {Z~Ö: ñdz Hḥ_Ümḥ
HḥVñZÀNḥg`Y`nñḥHḥaî`ñ`denḥn VVḥ 60

svabhāvajena kaunteya nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇa ।
kartuṁ ne 'cchasi yan mohāt kariṣyasi avaśo 'pi tat ॥ 18.60

svabhāvajena: by one's own nature; kaunteya: O son of Kunti; nibaddhaḥ: conditioned; svena: by one's own; karmaṇa: activities; kartuṁ: to do; na: not; icchasi: like; yat: that; mohāt: by illusion; kariṣyasi: you will act; avaśo: imperceptibly; api: even; tat: that

18.60 *O Arjuna, you are controlled by your own natural conditioning. Therefore, you shall do even against your will, what you do not wish to do out of delusion.*

Ṡa: gdaṡmZṡōēēO {VōV
^m`YgdṡmZ`Yīnē\$TṡZ_m`n& 61

*īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām hṛddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati |
bhrāmayan sarvabhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā || 18.61*

īśvaraḥ: the Supreme Lord; *sarvabhūtānām*: of all living entities; *hṛddeśe*: in the location of the heart; *arjuna*: O Arjuna; *tiṣṭhati*: resides; *bhrāmayan*: causing to travel; *sarvabhūtāni*: all living entities; *yantra*: machine; *ārūḍhāni*: being so placed; *māyayā*: under the illusion

18.61 The supreme Lord resides in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the activities of all living entities who are acting as machines under the illusion of the material world.

V_d eaU\$JĀN>gdṡmZ`^mV
VĒagnKnēnāṡenpV`nWmZ\$ānān`{g emēV_ 62

*tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha sarva bhāvena bhārata |
tatprasādāt parām śāntim sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam || 18.62*

tam: unto Him; *eva*: certainly; *śaraṇaṁ*: surrender; *gaccha*: go; *sarva bhāvena*: in all respects; *bhārata*: O son of Bharata; *tatprasādāt*: by His grace; *parām*: supreme; *śāntim*: in peace; *sthānaṁ*: abode; *prāpsyasi*: you will get; *śāśvatam*: eternal

18.62 Surrender to Him completely. By His grace you will attain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

B{V VokmZ_m>`mV\$JmKZmVā\$`m
{d_r`VXeFU`WĀN\$g VWm Hōē 63

*iti te jñānam ākhyātaṁ guhyād guhyataraṁ mayā |
vimṛśyai 'tad aśeṣeṇa yathe 'cchasi tathā kuru || 18.63*

iti: thus; *te*: unto you; *jñānam*: knowledge; *ākhyātām*: described; *guhyāt*: confidential; *guhyataram*: still more confidential; *mayā*: by Me; *vimṛśya*: by deliberation; *etat*: that; *aśeṣeṇa*: fully; *yathā*: as you; *icchasi*: you like; *tathā*: that; *kuru*: perform

18.63 *I have explained the knowledge that is the secret of secrets. After fully reflecting on this, do as you wish.*

gd9v_ſ^y : eUw_ona_ſdM:~
Bim{g_oNt_{V VVmdú`m_ Vo{hV_~ 64

sarvaguhyatamam bhūyaḥ śṛṇu me paramam vacaḥ |
iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti tato vakṣyāmi te hitam || 18.64

sarvaguhyatamam: the most confidential of all; *bhūyaḥ*: again; *śṛṇu*: just hear; *me*: from Me; *paramam*: the supreme; *vacaḥ*: instruction; *iṣṭo 'si*: you are very dear to Me; *me*: of Me; *dṛḍham*: very; *iti*: thus; *tataḥ*: therefore; *vakṣyāmi*: I am speaking; *te*: for your; *hitam*: benefit

18.64 *Because you are My dear friend, I express this truth to you. This is the most confidential of all knowledge. Hear this from Me. It is for your benefit.*

_Ÿ_Zm^d_Ø°\$m_ÚnOr_ñZ_ñHñ~
_m_ñj`{g gË`\$Voà{VOnZo{à`m{g_~ 65

manmanā bhava madbhakto madyājī mām namaskuru |
mām evai 'śyasi satyam te pratijāne priyo 'si me || 18.65

manmanāḥ: thinking of Me; *bhava*: just become; *madbhaktaḥ*: My devotee; *madyājī*: My worshiper; *mām*: unto Me; *namaskuru*: offer your obeisances; *mām*: unto Me; *eva*: certainly; *evai 'śyasi*: come; *satyam*: truly; *te*: to you; *pratijāne*: I promise; *priyaḥ*: dear; *asi*: you are; *me*: Mine

18.65 *Always think of Me and become My devotee. Worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will certainly attain to Me. This I promise you because you are My very dear friend.*

gdY_nñ[aE`Á`_m_b\$eaU\$sdO&
Ah\$Edmgdñmā`no_nj`{`î`ñ`_meM:V& 66

sarvadharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja ।
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ ॥ 18.66

sarvadharmān: all principles of right conduct; parityajya: abandoning; mām: unto Me; ekaṁ: only; śaraṇaṁ: surrender; vraja: go; ahaṁ: I; tvā: you; sarva: all; pāpebhyaḥ: from sinful reactions; mokṣayiṣyāmi: deliver; mā: not; śucaḥ: worry

18.66 Abandon all principles and concepts of right conduct and simply surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Have no worry.

BX\$VoZn/nñH\$m`Zm^°\$m`H\$XnMZ&
Z Mmew`fdodnA`\$Z M`_n\$`mā`gē`{V& 67

idaṁ te nā 'tapaskāya nā 'bhaktāya kadācana ।
na cā 'śuśrūṣave vācyam na ca mām yo 'bhyasūyati ॥ 18.67

idaṁ: this; te: you; na: never; atapaskāya: one who is not austere; na: never; abhaktāya: one who is not a devotee; kadācana: at any time; na: never; ca: also; aśuśrūṣave: one who is not engaged in devotional service; vācyam: to be spoken; na: never; ca: also; mām: unto Me; yaḥ: anyone; abhyasūyati: envious

18.67 This knowledge should never be spoken by you to one who is devoid of austerity, who is without devotion, who does not desire to listen, or who speaks ill of Me.

`BX\$na_\$Jw\$`_Ø`°d{`^Ym`{V&
^q°\$`_{`nan\$H\$Edm`_m`dī`È`gē`:`V& 68

ya idaṁ paramaṁ guhyaṁ madbhakteṣv abhidhāsyati ।
bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām evai 'ṣyaty asaṁśayaḥ ॥ 18.68

yaḥ: anyone; *idaṁ*: this; *paramaṁ*: most; *guhyaṁ*: confidential; *mat*: Mine; *bhakteṣu*: amongst devotees of; *abhidhāsyati*: explains; *bhaktiṁ*: devotional service; *mayi*: unto Me; *parāṁ*: transcendental; *kṛtvā*: having done; *mām*: unto Me; *eva*: certainly; *eṣyati*: comes; *asaṁśayaḥ*: without doubt

18.68 One who communicates the supreme secret to the devotees performs the highest devotional service to Me, and at the end he will without doubt, come back to Me.

na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya kṛttamaḥ |
bhavitā na ca me tasmād anyāḥ priyataro bhuvi || 18.69

na: never; *ca*: and; *tasmāt*: therefore; *manuṣyeṣu*: among mankind; *kaścit*: anyone; *me*: My; *priya kṛttamaḥ*: more dear; *bhavitā*: will become; *na*: nor; *ca*: and; *me*: My; *tasmāt*: than him; *anyāḥ*: other; *priyatarāḥ*: dearer; *bhuvi*: in this world

18.69 No other person shall do a more pleasing service to Me, and no one on the earth shall be more dear to Me.

adhyeṣyate ca ya imaṁ dharmyaṁ saṁvādam āvayoḥ |
jñānayajñena tenā 'ham iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ || 18.70

adhyeṣyate: will study; *ca*: also; *ya*: he; *imaṁ*: this; *dharmyaṁ*: sacred; *saṁvādam*: conversation; *āvayoḥ*: of ours; *jñāna*: knowledge; *yajñena*: by sacrifice; *tena*: by him; *aham*: I; *iṣṭaḥ*: worshiped; *syām*: shall be; *iti*: thus; *me*: My; *matiḥ*: opinion

18.70 I say that One who studies this sacred dialogue worships Me by sacrifice of his intelligence.

Arjuna uvāca: Arjuna said; *naṣṭaḥ*: dispelled; *mohaḥ*: illusion; *smṛtiḥ*: memory; *labdhā*: regained; *tvatprasādāt*: by Your mercy; *mayā*: by me; *acyuta*: O infallible Krishna; *sthitaḥ*: situated; *asmi*: I am; *gata*: removed; *saṁdehaḥ*: all doubts; *kariṣye*: I shall execute; *vacanaṁ*: order; *tava*: Your

18.73 Arjuna said: O Lord, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy, and I am now firm and free from doubt and ready to obey you.

gD` CdnMŸ
BĒ` hšdmgWdñ` nnVŸ M_hnĒ_Z:Ÿ
gšlnK{__I nf_QŸ\$ano_hfŸ_Ÿ 74

Saṁjaya uvāca
ity ahaṁ vāsudevasya pārthasya ca mahātmanah I
saṁvādam imam aśrauṣam adbhutaṁ romahaṣaṇam || 18.74

Saṁjaya uvāca: Sanjaya said; *iti*: thus; *ahaṁ*: I; *vāsudevasya*: of Krishna; *pārthasya*: of Arjuna; *ca*: also; *mahātmanah*: two great souls; *saṁvādam*: discussing; *imam*: this; *aśrauṣam*: heard; *adbhutaṁ*: wonder; *romahaṣaṇam*: hair standing on end

18.74 Sanjaya said: Thus have I heard the conversation of two great souls, Krishna and Arjuna. And so wonderful is that message that my hair stands on end.

ì`mgàgnKñANŸdnZVX2Ÿw_h\$na_Ÿ
`mł\$`młoanĒH\$ŸUnĒgmj nĒH\$W`V: ñd`_Ÿ 75Ÿ

vyasāprasādāc chrutavān etad guhyam ahaṁ param I
yogaṁ yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt sāksāt kathayataḥ svayam || 18.75

vyasāprasādāt: by the mercy of Vyasadeva; *śrutavān*: heard; *etat*: this; *guhyam*: confidential; *ahaṁ*: I; *param*: the supreme; *yogaṁ*: mysticism; *yogeśvarāt*: from the master of all mysticism; *kṛṣṇāt*: from Krishna; *sāksāt*: directly; *kathayataḥ*: speaking; *svayam*: personally

18.75 *By the mercy of Vyasa, I have heard these most confidential words directly from Krishna, the master of all mysticism, who was speaking personally to Arjuna.*

amO'gñ_É` gñ_É` gññK{__ØV_®
HñedñO'®` nñ nñ` šöî` nñ_ M _ñp_ñp_® 76

*rājan saṁsmṛtya-saṁsmṛtya saṁvādam imam adbhutam |
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyaṁ hr̥ṣyāmi ca muhur-muhuh || 18.76*

rājan: O King; *saṁsmṛtya*: remembering; *saṁsmṛtya*: remembering; *saṁvādam*: message; *imam*: this; *adbhutam*: wonderful; *keśava*: Lord Krishna; *arjunayoḥ*: and Arjuna; *puṇyaṁ*: pious; *hr̥ṣyāmi*: taking pleasure; *ca*: also; *muhur-muhuh*: always, repeatedly

18.76 *O King, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous and holy dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I take pleasure, being thrilled every moment.*

Vf gñ_É` gñ_É` êñ_É` ØV\$haov®
{dñ_` nñ_o_hñZ²amO'öî` nñ_ M nñ: nñ:® 77

*tac ca saṁsmṛtya-saṁsmṛtya rūpam atyadbhutaṁ hareḥ |
vismayo me mahān rājan hr̥ṣyāmi ca punaḥ-punaḥ || 18.77*

tat: that; *ca*: also; *saṁsmṛtya*: remembering; *saṁsmṛtya*: remembering; *rūpam*: form; *ati*: great; *adbhutaṁ*: wonderful; *hareḥ*: of Lord Krishna; *vismayaḥ*: wonder; *me*: my; *mahān*: great; *rājan*: O King; *hr̥ṣyāmi*: enjoying; *ca*: also; *punaḥ-punaḥ*: repeatedly

18.77 *O King, when I remember the wonderful form of Lord Krishna, I am struck with even greater wonder, and I rejoice again and again.*

`î` nñ_oea: HñUñ`î nñVñYZV®
Vî I r{dñ` nñ^ñVYñmZr{V_ñV_® 78

yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ ।
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama ॥ 18.78

yatra: where; yogeśvaraḥ: the master of mysticism; kṛṣṇaḥ: Lord Krishna; yatra: where; pārthaḥ: the son of Pritha; dhanurdharaḥ: the carrier of the bow and arrow; tatra: there; śrīḥ: opulence; vijayaḥ: victory; bhūtiḥ: exceptional power; dhruvā: certain; nītiḥ: morality; matir mama: is my opinion.

18.78 Wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Partha, the supreme carrier of bow and arrow, there will certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality. That is my opinion.

B{V I r_ØJd0rVngn{ZfEgw~{dUñ nš`nlemóo
I rHñUñOgñko_nj_gš`ng`nolnoZm_AiñKñmU`m`...V&&

iti śrīmad bhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde mokṣa saṁnyāsa yogo nāma aṣṭādaśo 'dhyāyaḥ ॥

In the Upaniṣad of the Bhagavad gita, the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme, the science of Yoga and the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, this is the eighteenth discourse designated:

Mokṣa Sanyāsa Yogaḥ

Appendix





Scientific Research on Bhagavad Gita

Several institutions have conducted experiments using scientific and statistically supported techniques to verify the truth behind Bhagavad Gita. Notable amongst them is the work carried out by Maharishi Mahesh yogi, whose findings are published through Maharishi Ved Vigyan Vishwa Vidyapeetam.

Studies conducted using meditation techniques related to truths expressed in the verses of Bhagavad Gita have shown that the quality of life is significantly improved through meditation. These studies have found that meditators experience a greater sense of peace resulting in a reduced tendency towards conflict.

Meditators gain greater respect for and appreciation of others. Their own inner fulfilment increases resulting in improved self-respect and self-reliance, leading to Self Actualization.

One's ability to focus along with brain function integration is enhanced. These have resulted in greater comprehension, creativity, faster response time in decision-making and superior psychomotor coordination.

Stress levels have been shown to decrease with enhanced sensory perception and overall health. The tendency towards depression has been clearly shown to decrease.

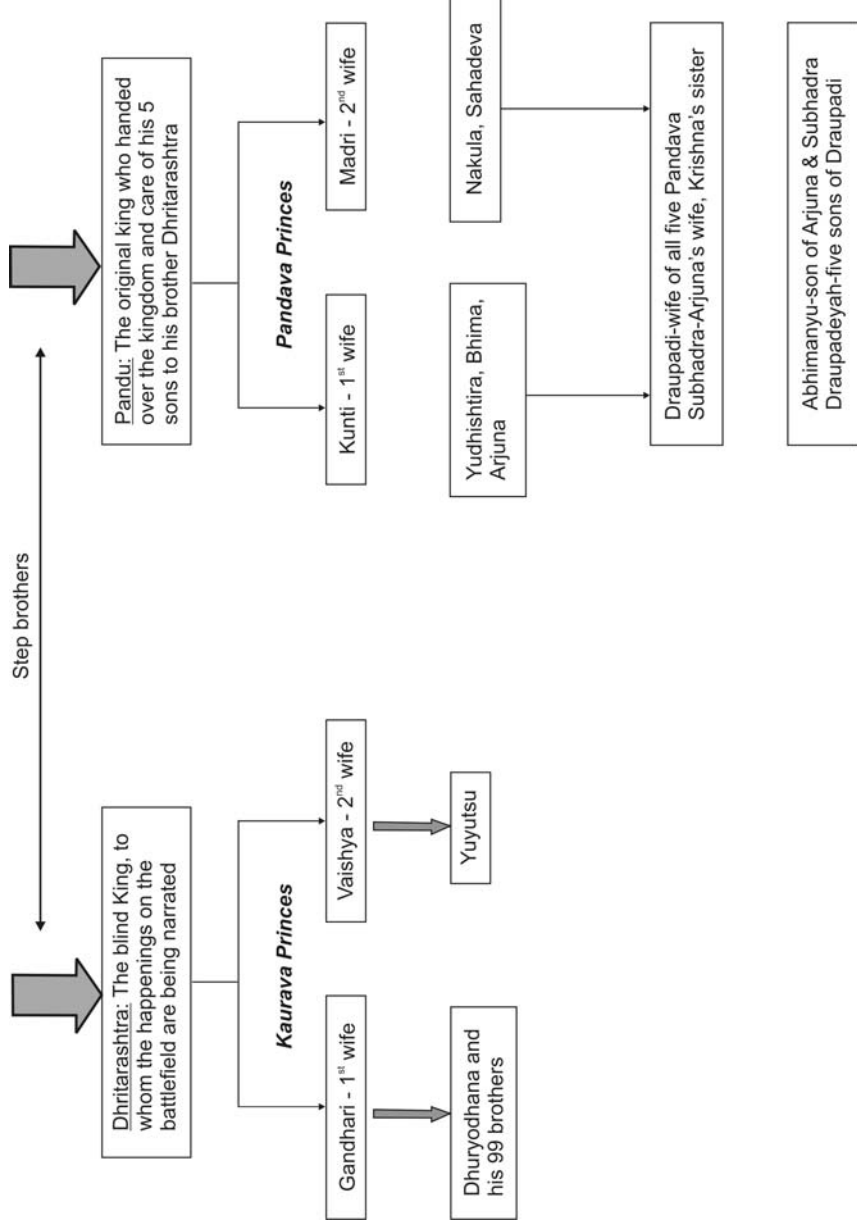
There is enough evidence to show that as a result of meditation, individuals gain a better ethical lifestyle that in turn improves their interaction with others in the community, resulting in less conflict and crime. Group meditation of 7000 people (square root of 1% of world population at the time of the study) was significantly correlated to a reduction in conflict worldwide.

Meditation leads to higher levels of consciousness. Through the research tools of Applied Kinesiology, Dr. David Hawkins (author of the book *Power vs. Force*) and others have shown that human consciousness has risen in the last few decades, crossing a critical milestone for the first time in human history. Dr. Hawkins'

research also documents that Bhagavad Gita is at the very highest level of Truth conveyed to humanity.

We acknowledge with gratitude the work done by the Maharishi Mahesh yogi institutions and Dr. David Hawkins in establishing the truth of this great scripture.

Kuru Family Tree





Key Characters in Bhagavad Gita

Pandavas' side:

Krishna	: god Incarnate; related to both Kaurava and Pandava; Arjuna's charioteer in the war
Drupada	: A great warrior and father of Draupadi
Drishtadyumna	: The son of king Drupada
Shikhandi	: A mighty archer and a transsexual person
Virata	: Abhimanyu's father-in-law; king of a neighboring kingdom
Yuyudhana	: Krishna's charioteer and a great warrior
Kashiraj	: King of the neighboring kingdom of Kashi
Chekitan	: A great warrior
Kuntibhoj	: Adoptive father of Kunti, the mother of the first three Pandava princes
Purujit	: Brother of Kuntibhoj
Shaibhya	: Leader of the Shibi tribe
Drishtaketu	: king of Chedis
Uttamouja	: A great warrior

Kaurava's Side:

Sanjay	: Minister and narrator of events to Dritarashtra
Bhishma	: Great grandfather of the Kauravas & Pandavas; great warrior

Drona	: A great archer and teacher of both Kauravas and Arjuna
Vikarna	: Third of the Kaurava brothers
Karna	: Pandavas' half brother, born to Kunti before her marriage
Ashvatthama	: Drona's son and Achilles heel; said to always speak the truth
Kripacharya	: Teacher of martial arts to both Kauravas and Pandavas
Shalya	: king of neighboring kingdom and brother of Madri, Nakula and Sahadeva's mother
Soumadatti	: king of Bahikas
Dusshassana	: One of Kaurava brothers; responsible for insulting Draupadi



Glossary

Ābharāṇa: adornment; *vastrābharāṇa* is adornment with clothes

Abhyāsa: exercise; practice

Ācārya: teacher; literally 'one who walks with'

Advaita: concept of non-duality; that individual self and the cosmic SELF are one and the same; as different from the concepts of *dvaita* and *viśiṣṭādvaita*, which consider self and SELF to be mutually exclusive

Āhāra: food; also with reference to sensory inputs as in *pratyāhāra*

Ājñā: order, command; the third eye energy centre

Ākāśa: space, sky; subtlest form of energy of universe

Amṛta, *amṛt*: divine nectar whose consumption leads to immortality

Anāhata: that which is not created; heart energy centre

Ānanda: bliss; very often used to refer to joy, happiness etc.

Angulimaal: a highway robber and murderer who wore a garland with the fingers of his victims. He was later transformed by Buddha and became a monk in Buddha's monastery

Añjana: collyrium, black pigment used to paint the eye lashes

Annamalai Swamigal: enlightened disciple and personal assistant of enlightened master Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

Āpas: water

Ārati: worship of the deity using lit lamps

Ārti: worshipping with a flame or light, as with a lamp lit with oiled wick, or burning camphor

Ashtavakra: An enlightened sage of ancient India, authored *Ashtavakra Samhita*

Āśīrvād: blessing

Ashtanga Yoga: Eight fold path to enlightenment prescribed by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutra*

Āśraya: grounded in reality; *aśraya doṣa*: defect related to reality

Ātma, *ātman*: individual Self; part of the universal *Brahman*

Atma Shatakam: Poem of six stanzas composed by enlightened master Adi Sankara , summarizing the concept of *Advaita* or Non-dualistic philosophy

Aurangzeb: one of the last Mughal emperors; greatest of all the Mughal emperors who ruled India; a despotic ruler

Beedi: local Indian cigarette

Bīja: seed; *bīja-mantra* refers to the single syllable *mantras* used to invoke certain deities

Bhagavān: literally god; often used for an enlightened Master

Bhāvana: visualization

Brahma: The God of creation in the Hindu Trinity of *Brahma* (Creator), *Viṣṇu* (Preserver) and *Śiva* (Rejuvenator)

Bhakti: devotion; *bhakta*, a devotee

Bhagavatam: Devotional stories on Lord Krishna, compiled by Veda Vyasa.

Big Bang: One of the cosmological models of the Universe; proposed by Georges Lemaitre, a Roman Catholic priest

Brahma: the Creator; one of the Hindu trinity of supreme gods, the other two being *Vishnu* and *Shiva*

Brahmacāri: literally one who moves with the true reality, *Brahman*, one without fantasies, but usually taken to mean a celibate; *brahmacarya* is the quality or state of being a *brahmacāri*

Brahman: ultimate reality of the Divine, universal intelligent energy

Brāhmaṇa: person belonging to the class engaged in *Vedic* studies, priestly class

Buddhi: mind, intelligence; mind is also called by other names, *manas*, *citta* etc.

Buddhu: a fool

Buddha: Enlightened master who preached of the 'eight fold path' to achieve 'nirvāṇa' or salvation.

Cakra: literally a 'wheel'; refers to energy centres in the mind-body system

Cakṣu: eye, intelligent power behind senses

Candāla: an untouchable; usually one who skins animals.

Chandana: sandalwood

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu: An enlightened sage from West Bengal, believed to be an incarnation of Lord Krishna

Chitragupta: a character in the Hindu mythology who keeps account of the events in one's life to reveal at the time of person's death.

Citta: mind; also *manas*, *buddhi*.

Dakṣiṇāyana: Sun's southward movement starting 21st June

Darśan: vision; usually referred to seeing divinity

Dharma: righteousness

Dhee: wisdom.

Dīkṣa: grace bestowed by the master and the energy transferred by the master to the disciple at initiation or any other time, may be through a *mantra*, a touch, a glance or even a thought

Doṣa: defect

Dhyāna: meditation

Dr. Brian Weiss: a Psychotherapist, famous for his book, 'Many Lives, Many Masters.'

Dr̥ṣṭi: sight, seeing with mental eye

Gada: weapon similar to a mace; also *gadadhāyudha*

Gāṇḍīva: Divine bow presented to Arjuna by Agni, god of Fire, in the epic Mahabharata

Gopī, *gopikās*: literally a cowherdess; usually referred to the devotees who played with Krishna, and were lost in Him

Gopura, *gopuram*: temple tower

Govindapada: Adi Sankara's master of enlightened master Adi Sankara

Gṛhastā: a householder, a married person; coming from the word *griha*, meaning house

Guṇa: the three human behavioral characteristics or predispositions; *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*

Guru: Master; literally one who leads from *gu* (darkness) to *ru* (light)

Gurukul, *Gurukulam*: literally ‘tradition of *guru*’, refers to the ancient education system in which children were handed over to a *guru* at a very young age by parents for upbringing and education

Hammurabhi: Ancient king of Mesopotamia, known for his Hammurabhi’s code, one of the first written books on codes of Law

Homa: ritual to *Agni*, the god of fire; metaphorically represents the transfer of energy from the energy of *Ākāśa* (space), through *Vāyu* (Air), *Agni* (Fire), *Āpas* (Water), and *Prthvī* (Earth) to humans. Also *yāga*, *yagna*

Ichhā: desire

I Ching: one of the oldest of Chinese classical texts, describes Cosmology and philosophy

Idā: along with *pingala* and *suṣūmna*, the virtual energy pathway through which *pranic* energy flows

Itihāsa: legend, epic, mythological stories; also *purāṇa*

Jāti: birth; *jāti-doṣa*: defect related to birth

Jāgrata: wakefulness

Japa: literally ‘muttering’; continuous repetition of the name of divinity

Jīvasamādhi: burial place of an enlightened master, where his spirit lives on

jīva: means living

Jyotiṣa: Astrology; *jyotiṣi* is an astrologer

Kaivalya: liberation; same as *mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*

Kāla: time; also *mahākāla*

Kalpa: vast period of time; *Yuga* is a fraction of *Kalpa*

Kalpanā: imagination

Karma: spiritual law of cause and effect, driven by *vāsana* and *samskāra*

King Janaka: a noble and benevolent king who ruled Mithila,, father of princess Sita in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Koan: Zen parables, an anecdote or riddle without any solution to show the inadequacy of logical reasoning

Kośa: energy layer surrounding body; there are 5 such layers. These are: *annamaya* or body, *prānamaya* or breath, *manomaya* or thoughts, *vignānamaya* or sleep and *ānandamaya* or bliss *kośas*

Kriyā: action

Kṣaṇa: moment in time; refers to time between two thoughts

Kṣatriya: caste or *varṇa* of warriors

Kumbh Mela: Large spiritual gathering in India that occurs four times every twelve years, attracting millions of people. The four locations of Kumbh Mela are Prayag in Allahabad at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the underground Saraswati river; Haridwar on the banks of Ganga; Ujjain along the Kshipra river and Nasik along Godavari.

Kusha grass: Sacred grass used in the Vedic tradition for various religious ceremonies. The seat made of kusha grass and covered with a skin and a cloth is considered ideal for meditation.

Kuṇḍalini: energy that resides at the root chakra '*mūlādhāra*'

Lao Tzu: enlightened master and father of Taoism ancient Chinese philosopher, referred as 'One of the Three Pure Ones.'

Mahā: great; as in *mahaṛṣi*, great sage; *mahāvākya*, great scriptural saying

Mālā: a garland, a necklace; *rudrākṣamālā* is a garland made of the seeds of the *rudrākṣa* tree

Mālā: garland

Manana: thinking, meditation

Manas: mind; also *buddhi*, *citta*

Mandir: temple

Maṅgala: auspicious; *maṅgala sūtra*, literally auspicious thread, the yellow or gold thread or necklace a married Hindu woman wears

Mantra: a sound, a formula; sometimes a word or a set of words, which because of their inherent sounds, have energizing properties. *Mantras* are used as sacred chants to worship the Divine; *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* are approaches in spiritual evolution

Manickavasagchakar: One of the main Nayanmars or Tamil Saivite poet., He compiled ‘Thiruivasagam’, a collection of hymns in praise of Lord Shiva.

Māyā: that which is not, not reality, illusion; all life is *māyā* according to *advaita*

Mimamsa: a system of ancient Indian philosophy

Mokṣa: liberation; same as *nirvāṇa*, *samādhi*, *turīya* etc.

Mūlādhāra: the first energy centre, *mūlā* is root; *ādhāra* is foundation, here existence

Nachiketa: lead character in Kathopanishad, believed to have learnt the secret of death from Lord Yama (god of death) himself.

Nadi: river

Nāḍi: nerve; also an energy pathway that is not physical

Nāga: a snake; a *nāga-sādhu* is an ascetic belonging to a group that wears no clothes

Namaskār: traditional greeting with raised hands, with palms brought together

Nānta: without end

Nārī: woman

Nataraja: a depiction of Lord Śiva as the cosmic dancer, main deity in the famous temple at Chidambaram

Nididhyāsana: what is expressed

Nimitta: reason; *nimitta-doṣa*, defect based on reason

Nirvāṇa: liberation; same as *mokṣa*, *samādhi*

Nisargadatta Maharaj: An enlightened master who lived in Mumbai. Passed away on 8th September 1981, at the age of 84.

Niyama: the second of eight paths of Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga; refers to a number of day-to-day rules of observance for a spiritual path

Pāpa: sin

Paramahansa Yogananda: an enlightened master, advocated practice of Kriya Yoga to attain Self-realization.

Patanjali: Father of Yoga, famous for his treatise on yoga called Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

Prakashananda Saraswati: a Rasik saint in the tradition of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, his teachings are mainly based on the Bhagavad Gita.

Phala: fruit; *phalasruti* refers to the assumed benefits of worship

Paramahansa: literally the 'supreme swan'; refers to an enlightened being

Parikrama: the ritual of going around a holy location, such as a hill or water spot

Parivrājaka: wandering by an ascetic monk

Piṅgala: please see *idā*

Prāṇa: life energy; also refers to breath; *prāṇāyāma* is control of breath

Pratyāhāra: literally 'staying away from food'; in this case refers to control of all senses as part of the eight fold Ashtanga Yoga

Prthvī: earth energy

Purohit: priest

Pūjā: Form of ritual worship

Puṇya: merit, beneficence

Purāṇa: epics and mythological stories such as *Mahabharata and Ramayana* etc.

Pūrṇa: literally 'complete'; refers in the *advaita* context to reality

Rajas, rajasic: the second characteristic of the three human *guṇa* or behaviour modes, referring to passionate action

Putra: son; *putrī*: daughter

Rakta: blood

Rāmāyaṇa: Famous Indian epic, authored by *Valmiki*

Rātrī: night

Ramkarishna Paramahansa: An enlightened master from Dakshineswar, West Bengal, India.

Ramana Maharshi: an enlightened master from Tiruvannamalai; composed 'Aksharamanamalai', the famous hymn on Arunachala hill

Ravana: Mighty emperor of Lanka, the villain in *Ramayana*, who abducted princess Sita in the Indian historical epic *Ramayana*.

Rene Descartes: French philosopher and mathematician, Father of Modern philosophy

Ṛṣi: a sage

Sādhana: practice, usually a spiritual practice

Sādhu: literally a 'good person'; refers to an ascetic; same as *sanyāsi*

Sahasranāma: 1000 names invoking a particular deity which devotees recite

Sahasrāra: lotus with thousand petals; the crown energy centre

Śakti: energy; intelligent energy; *Parāśakti* refers to universal energy, divinity; considered feminine; masculine aspect of Shakthi is Shiva

Samādhi: state of no-mind, no-thoughts; literally, becoming one's original state; liberated, enlightened state.

Samśaya: doubt

Samskāra: embedded memories of unfulfilled desires stored in the subconscious that drive one into decisions, into *karmic* action

Samyama: complete concentration

Sankalpa: decision

Sāṅkhya philosophy: One of the six schools of classical a system of orthodox Indian philosophy. *Sāṅkhya* philosophy regards the universe as consisting of two realities: *puruṣa* (self) and *prakṛti* (matter).

Sanyās: giving up worldly life; *sanyāsi* or *sanyāsin*, a monk, an ascetic

Sanyāsinī, refers to a female monk

Śāstra: sacred texts

Satva, *satvic*: the highest *guṇa* of spiritual calmness

Siddhi: extraordinary powers attained through spiritual practice

Shankara: an enlightened master from Kalady, Kerala. Exponent of *Advaita vedānta*

Śiṣya: disciple

Simha: lion; *Simha svapna*: nightmare

Śiva: rejuvenator in the trinity; often spelt as *Siva*. *Śiva* also means 'causeless auspiciousness'.

Smarana: remembrance; constantly remembering the Divine

Smṛti: literally 'that which is remembered'; refers to later day Hindu works which are rules, regulations, laws and epics, such as Manu's works, *Purāṇas* etc.

Śraddhā: trust, faith, belief, confidence

Śravaṇa: hearing

Sṛṣṭi: creation, which is created

Śruti: literally 'that which is heard'; refers to the ancient scriptures of *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and Bhagavad Gita; considered to be revealed scriptures

Stotras: devotional verses, to be recited or sung

Śūdra: caste or *varṇa* of manual labourers

Sumerian civilization: an ancient civilization that existed in the Mesopotamia till the 2nd millennium BC

Sūtra: literally 'thread'; refers to epigrams, short verses which impart spiritual techniques

Śūnya: literally zero; however, Buddha uses this word to mean reality

Suṣuṃna: Please see 'ida'

Svādiṣṭhāna: where Self is established; the groin or spleen energy centre

Svapna: dream

Svatantra: free

Tamas, *tamasic*: the *guṇa* of laziness or inaction

Tantra: esoteric techniques used in spiritual evolution

Tapas: severe spiritual endeavour, penance

Thatagata: Buddhahood, a pali word

Tīrtha: water; *tīrtham* is a holy river and a pilgrimage centre

Trikāla: all three time zones, past, present and future; *trikālajñāni* is one who can see all three at the same time; an enlightened being is beyond time and space

Turīya: state of *samādhi*, no-mind

Upaniṣad: literally 'sitting with an enlightenend master'

Uttarāyaṇa: Sun's northward movement

Vaiśya: caste or *varṇa* of tradesmen

Valmiki: author of the famous epic, *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Vānaprastha: the third stage in one's life, (the first stage being that of a student, and the second that of householder) when a householder, man or woman, gives up worldly activities and focuses on spiritual goals

Varṇa: literally colour; refers to the caste grouping in the traditional Hindu social system; originally based on aptitude, and later corrupted to privilege of birth

Vāsana: the subtle essence of memories and desires, *saṁskāra*, that get carried forward from birth to birth

Vastra: clothes

Vastrābharāṇa: removal of clothes, often used to refer to Draupadi's predicament in the Mahabharata, when she was attempted to be disrobed.

Vāyu: Air

Veda: literally knowledge; refers to ancient Hindu scriptures, believed to have been received by enlightened ṛṣi at the being level; also called *śruti*, along with *Upaniṣad*

Vibhūti : sacred ash worn by many Hindus on forehead; said to remind themselves of the transient nature of life; of glories too

Vidhi: literally law, natural law; interpreted as fate or destiny

Vidyā: knowledge, education

Viśāda: depression, dilemma etc.

Viṣṇu: The Preserver in the trinity; His incarnations include Krishna, Rama etc. in ten incarnations; also means 'all encompassing'

Viśvarūpa: universal form

Vivekananda: An enlightened monk from West Bengal, India; was also Ramakrishna Paramahansa's leading disciple

Yama: discipline as well as death; One of the eight fold paths prescribed in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga; refers to spiritual regulations of *satya* (truth), *ahimsā* (non violence), *aparigraha* (living simply); *asteya* (not coveting others' properties) and *brahmacarya* (giving up fantasies); *yama* is also the name of the Hindu god of justice and death

Yantra: literally 'tool'; usually a mystical and powerful graphic diagram, such as the *Śrīcakra*, inscribed on a copper plate, and sanctified in a ritual blessed by a divine presence or an enlightened Master

Yoga: literally union, union of the individual self and the divine SELF; often taken to mean *Haṭha yoga*, which is one of the components of *yogasana*, relating to specific body postures

Yuga: a period of time as defined in Hindu scriptures; there are four *yugas*: *satya*, *tretā*, *dvāpara* and *kali*, the present being *kali yuga*.

Zarathustra: founder of the religion of Zoroastrianism followed by Parsis



Appendix

About Paramahansa Nithyananda

Paramahansa Nithyananda is an enlightened master living amidst us today. With a worldwide movement for meditation and inner bliss, Nithyananda offers solutions for situations as practical as every day stress to the quest for something as profound as enlightenment.

Nithyananda left home at a young age and traveled the length and breadth of India, visiting holy shrines, associating with several yogis and mystics during this period. He realized his intrinsic knowledge through the paths of meditation, yoga, knowledge, devotion, Tantra and other Eastern metaphysical sciences. With an enlightened insight into the core of human nature, Nithyananda has defined his mission for humanity at large.

Rooted in the *vedic* tradition and embracing all world religions as paths to the ultimate Truth, Nithyananda draws people from around the globe, crossing all societal, cultural, language, age and gender barriers.

Since its inception, **Nithyananda Dhyanapectam** in Bidadi, Bengaluru, India has been a spiritual center for devotees from all over the world. The organization renders innumerable services and programs. The worldwide ashrams and centers offer programs in Quantum Spirituality, where material and spiritual worlds merge to create blissful living.

The services provided by the organization include ■ meditation ■ yoga ■ corporate leadership programs ■ free energy healing through the *Nithya Spiritual Healing system* ■ free education to youth ■ promoting art and culture ■ *satsangs* (spiritual gatherings) ■ free medical camps and eye surgeries ■ free meals at all ashrams worldwide ■ a holistic system of education for children through the ashram *gurukul* ■ a one-year residential spiritual training program in India and more. The **Life**



Bliss Foundation, located in Los Angeles, USA spreads the powerful teachings and meditations cognized by Nithyananda to centers in North America, Europe and other parts of the world.

Nithyananda says, “Enlightenment flowers when individual consciousness disappears into Universal Consciousness. When you start living enlightenment, you automatically raise the human consciousness around you. Living enlightenment holds the key to global peace and inner bliss. Every individual should be a pioneer in the transition of human consciousness to Divine Consciousness.”

Programs and Workshops

Nithyananda Mission offers specialized meditation programs worldwide, to benefit millions of people at the levels of body, mind and spirit. A few of them are listed below:

Inner Awakening

An enlightenment intensive program for sincere seekers offering yoga, powerful teachings, meditation, initiation and more. This program is an intense experience to prepare the body-mind system to hold and radiate the experience of ‘living enlightenment’.

Life Bliss Engineering

Life Bliss Engineering program is an intense 3-month program with Nithyananda in the energy field of the Bengaluru ashram. It aims at awakening every participant to Living Enlightenment. It trains them to imbibe a vedic mind and a yogic body. It offers:

- Long-hour sessions in the presence of the master
- Powerful talks from the master
- Eye opening Question and Answer sessions directly with the master
- Specially designed meditation techniques in the presence of the master
- A vedic lifestyle with hands-on exposure to vedic culture and arts
- Short trips with the master to powerful temples of India and much more...

Life Bliss Program Level 1 (LBP Level 1)

- *Energize yourself*

A *chakra* based meditation program that relaxes and energizes the seven major *chakras* or subtle energy centers in your system. It gives clear intellectual and experiential understanding of your various emotions such as greed, fear, worry, attention-need, stress, jealousy, ego, and discontentment. It is designed to create a spiritual effect at the physical level. It is a guaranteed life solution to experience the reality of your own bliss. When you are liberated from a particular emotion, you experience a new world, a new energy. It is a highly effective workshop, experienced by millions of people around the globe.



Life Bliss Program Level 2 (LBP Level 2)

- *Death demystified!*

A meditation program that unleashes the art of living by demystifying the process of dying. This program creates the space to detach from ingrained and unconscious emotions like guilt, pleasure and pain, all of which stem from the ultimate fear of death. It is a gateway to a new life that is driven by natural intelligence and spontaneous enthusiasm

Life Bliss Program Level 3 - Atma Spurana Program (LBP Level 3 - ATSP)

- *Connect with your Self!*

An indepth program that analyzes clearly the workings of the mind and shows you experientially how to be the master of the mind rather than be dictated by it. It imparts tremendous intellectual understanding coupled with powerful meditations to produce instant clarity and integration.

Life Bliss Program Level 3 - Bhakti Spurana Program (LBP Level 3 - BSP)

- *Integrate your Devotion*

A program that reveals the different dimensions of relating with others and with your deeper self. It clearly defines relationship as that which kindles and reveals your own unknown dimensions to you. It allows you to experience the real depth and joy of any relationship in your life.

Life Bliss Technology (LBT)

- *A free residential life sciences program*

Life Bliss Technology (LBT) is a residential program for youth between 18 and 30 years of age. With its roots in the Eastern system of *vedic* education, this program is designed to empower modern youth with good physical, mental and emotional health and practical life skills. By nurturing creative intelligence and spontaneity, and imparting life skills, it creates economically self-sufficient and spiritually fulfilled youth. Above all, it offers a lifetime opportunity to live and learn under the tutelage of an enlightened master.



Nithyanandam

An advanced meditation program for seekers where the presence of the Master and the intense energy field lead one to the state of *nithya ananda* – eternal bliss. It offers a range of techniques from meditation to service to sitting in the powerful presence of the master.

Kalpataru

An experiential meditation program sowing in you the seed of:

Shakti, the Energy to understand and change whatever you need to change in life,

Buddhi, the Intelligence to understand and accept whatever you don't need to change in life,

Yukti, the Clarity to understand and realize that however much you change, whatever you see as reality is itself a continuously changing dream,

Bhakti, the Devotion, the feeling of deep connection to That which is unchanging, eternal and Ultimate, and

Mukti, the Ultimate Liberation into Living Enlightenment when all these four are integrated.

This program empowers you with the energy to align your actions with your intentions so you move with success and inner bliss.

Nithyananda Mission Highlights

- **Meditation and de-addiction camps worldwide:** Over 2 million people impacted to date

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- **Nithya Spiritual Healing:** A system of cosmic energy healing administered free through 5000 ordained healers, through our worldwide ashrams and centers, touching 20,000 people globally every day – healing both mind and body
 - **Anna Daan (free food program):** 10,000 nutritious meals distributed every week through all the ashram *anna mandirs* for visitors, devotees and disciples thus improving health standards
 - **The Nithyananda Order and its training:** Spiritual aspirants ordained as *Sannyasis*, *Brahmacharis* and *Brahmacharinis*: who undergo years of intensive training in yoga, meditation, deep spiritual practice, Sanskrit, *vedic* chanting, life skills, and who run the 100% volunteer based ashrams of Nithyananda Mission worldwide, working in all Mission activities
 - **Nithya Yoga:** A revolutionary system of yoga in the lines of sage Patanjali's original teachings, taught worldwide.
 - **Nithyananda Vedic Temples and Ashrams:** Over 30 Vedic temples and ashrams worldwide.
 - **Meditation Programs in prisons:** Conducted in prisons and juvenile camps to reform extremist attitudes – resulting in amazing transformation among the inmates.
 - **Medical Camps:** Free treatment and therapies in allopathy, homeopathy, ayurveda, acupuncture, eye check-ups, eye surgeries, artificial limb donation camps, gynecology and more
 - **Support to children in rural areas:** School buildings, school uniforms and educational materials provided free to rural schools.
 - **Life Bliss Technology:** A free two year / three month program for youth teaching Life Engineering and the science of enlightenment
 - **Nithyananda Gurukul:** A modern scientific approach to education combined with the *vedic* system of learning – protecting and developing the innate intelligence of the child who flowers without repression, fear or peer pressure
 - **Corporate Meditation Programs:** Specially designed and conducted in corporate firms



worldwide including Microsoft, AT&T, Qualcomm, JP Morgan, Petrobras, Pepsi, Oracle, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) – with focus on intuitive management, leadership skills and team work.

- **Nithyananda Institute of Teachers' Training:** Over 300 teachers trained to teach: transformational meditation programs, Quantum Memory Program, Nithya Yoga, Health and Healing Programs, Spiritual Practice Programs and more
- **Media:** Articles in national and international newspapers and magazines, carrying transforming messages from Nithyananda
- **Nithyananda Publishers:** Over 5000 hours of Paramahansa Nithyananda's discourses transcribed, edited and published in-house and made available in stores through books, DVDs and CDs
- **Life Bliss Galleries:** Worldwide stores and mobile shops retailing recordings and books of Nithyananda's discourses and Nithya Kirtan recordings in 23 languages
- **Nithyananda Meditation & Healing Centers:** Worldwide, offering meditation and healing services
- **Nithyananda Sangeeth Academy:** Music, dance and other forms of art taught and encouraged in youth and elderly alike - live and through internet
- **Free Discourses on YouTube:** Over 500 free discourses on www.youtube.com – wisdom from the Master, easily accessible. Ranked top in viewership
- **Support to scientists and researchers:** Continually bridging gaps between science and spirituality through researches on spiritual energy and healing.
- **Nithyananda Youth Foundation:** A collection of inspired youth, building a divine and dynamic society with a common ideology of peace and enlightenment
- **Nithya Dheera Seva Sena:** Through transformation of self, this volunteer force of *Ananda Sevaks* trains and functions in the service of humanity, also serving as relief wing working towards disaster recovery management.

Contact Us

Listed below are some of the main centers of Nithyananda Mission.

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For further information visit www.nithyananda.org

Nithyananda Galleria

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- Enlivening music and chants for meditation and inner healing.



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 - Ethnic energy bead jewelry for men and women for tranquility and continued high energy.

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E-mail: nithyanandagalleria@gmail.com & shop@lifebliss.org

Suggested for Further Reading

- Living Enlightenment (Gospel of Paramahansa Nithyananda)
- Nithyananda Vol. 1
- Guaranteed Solutions
- Meditation is for you
- Don't Worry Be Happy
- Instant Tools for Blissful Living
- You Can Heal
- Follow Me In!
- The Door to Enlightenment
- Songs of Eternity (A coffee table book with Nithyananda's messages and pictures)
- You are No Sinner
- So You Want to Know The Truth?
- Uncommon answers to Common Questions

Over 500 FREE discourses of Nithyananda available at <http://www.youtube.com/lifeblissfoundation>

VOL 3

CHAPTERS 13 - 18

BhagavadGita

demystified

by

NITHYANANDA

The Gita demystified in the language of here and now by an enlightened master of this millennium.

The Bhagavad Gita is Lord Krishna's gift to the world given several thousand years ago. In these three volumes, Paramahansa Nithyananda, enlightened master of this millennium, demystifies the Gita in the language of here and now. He explains it relevant to the modern man. He shows how it can lead to blissful living in today's world. He assures the sincere seeker, the Supreme Experience, described by Krishna.

